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A TALE OF TWO CITIES

IN THREE BOOKS

BOOK THE FIRST

RECALLED TO LIFE

PREFACE.

WHEN I was acting, with my children and friends, in Mr. WILKIE COLLINS's drama of the Frozen Deep, I first conceived the main idea of this story. A strong desire was upon me then, to embody it in my own person ; and I traced out in my fancy, the state of mind of which it would necessitate the presentation to an observant spectator, with particular care and interest.

As the idea became familiar to me, it gradually shaped itself into its present form. Throughout its execution, it has had complete possession of me ; I have so far verified what is done and suffered in these pages, as that I have certainly done and suffered it all myself.

Whenever any reference (however slight) is made here to the condition of the French people before or during the Revolution, it is truly made, on the faith of trustworthy witnesses. It has been one of my hopes to add something to the popular and picturesque means of understanding that terrible time, though no one can hope to add anything to the philosophy of Mr. CARLYLE's wonderful book.

CHAPTER I.

The Period.

IT was the best of times, it was the worst of times, it was the age of wisdom, it was the age of foolishness, it was the epoch of belief, it was the epoch of incredulity, it was the season of Light, it was the season of Darkness, it was the spring of hope, it was the winter of despair, we had everything before us, we had nothing before us, we were all going direct to Heaven, we were all going direct the other way—in short, the period was so far like the present period, that some of its noisiest authorities insisted on its being received, for good or for evil, in the superlative degree of comparison only.

There were a king with a large jaw, and a queen with a plain face, on the throne of England; there were a king with a large jaw and a queen with a fair face, on the throne of France. In both countries it was clearer than crystal to the lords of the State preserves of loaves and fishes, that things in general were settled for ever.

It was the year of Our Lord one thousand seven hundred and seventy-five. Spiritual revelations were conceded to England at that favoured period, as at this. Mrs. Southcott had recently attained her five-and-twentieth blessed birth-day, of whom a prophetic private in the Life Guards had heralded the sublime appearance by announcing that arrangements were made for the swallowing up of London and Westminster. Even the Cock-lane ghost had been laid only a round dozen of years, after rapping out its messages, as the spirits of this very year last past (supernaturally deficient in originality) rapped out theirs. Mere messages in the earthly order of events had lately come to the English Crown and People, from a congress of British subjects in America: which, strange to relate, have proved more important to the human race than any communications yet received through any of the chickens of the Cock-lane brood.

France, less favoured on the whole as to matters spiritual than her sister of the shield and trident, rolled with exceeding smoothness down hill, making paper money and spending it. Under the guidance of her Christian pastors, she entertained herself, besides, with such humane achievements as sentencing a youth to have his hands cut off, his tongue torn out with pincers, and his body burned alive, because he had not kneeled down in the rain to do honour to a dirty procession of monks which passed within his view, at a distance of

some fifty or sixty yards. It is likely enough that, rooted in the woods of France and Norway, there were growing trees, when that sufferer was put to death, already marked by the Woodman, Fate, to come down and be sawn into boards, to make a certain movable framework with a sack and a knife in it, terrible in history. It is likely enough that in the rough outhouses of some tillers of the heavy lands adjacent to Paris, there were sheltered from the weather that very day, rude carts, bespattered with rustic mire, snuffed about by pigs, and roosted in by poultry, which the Farmer, Death, had already set apart to be his tumbrils of the Revolution. But, that Woodman and that Farmer, though they work unceasingly, work silently, and no one heard them as they went about with muffled tread : the rather, forasmuch as to entertain any suspicion that they were awake, was to be atheistical and traitorous.

In England, there was scarcely an amount of order and protection to justify much national boasting. Daring burglaries by armed men, and highway robberies, took place in the capital itself every night ; families were publicly cautioned not to go out of town without removing their furniture to upholsterers' warehouses for security ; the highwayman in the dark was a City tradesman in the light, and, being recognised and challenged by his fellow-tradesman whom he stopped in his character of "the Captain," gallantly shot him through the head and rode away ; the mail was waylaid by seven robbers, and the guard shot three dead ; and then got shot dead himself by the other four, "in consequence of the failure of his ammunition : " after which the mail was robbed in peace ; that magnificent potentate, the Lord Mayor of London, was made to stand and deliver on Turnham Green, by one highwayman, who despoiled the illustrious creature in sight of all his retinue ; prisoners in London gaols fought battles with their turnkeys, and the majesty of the law fired blunderbusses in among them, loaded with rounds of shot and ball ; thieves snipped off diamond crosses from the necks of noble lords at Court drawing-rooms ; musketeers went into St. Giles's, to search for contraband goods, and the mob fired on the musketeers, and the musketeers fired on the mob, and nobody thought any of these occurrences much out of the common way. In the midst of them, the hangman, ever busy and ever worse than useless, was in constant requisition ; now, stringing up long rows of miscellaneous criminals ; now, hanging a house-breaker on Saturday who had been taken on Tuesday ; now, burning people in the hand at Newgate by the dozen, and now burning pamphlets at the door of Westminster Hall ; to-day, taking the life of an atro-

cious murderer, and to-morrow of a wretched pilferer who had robbed a farmer's boy of sixpence.

All these things and a thousand like them, came to pass in and close upon the dear old year one thousand seven hundred and seventy-five. Environed by them, while the Woodman and the Farmer worked unheeded, those two of the large jaws, and those other two of the plain and the fair faces, trod with stir enough, and carried their divine rights with a high hand. Thus did the year one thousand seven hundred and seventy-five conduct their Greatnesses, and myriads of small creatures—the creatures of this chronicle among the rest—along the roads that lay before them.

CHAPTER II.

The Mail.

It was the Dover road that lay, on a Friday night late in November, before the first of the persons with whom this history has business. The Dover road lay, as to him, beyond the Dover mail, as it lumbered up Shooter's Hill. He walked up-hill in the mire by the side of the mail, as the rest of the passengers did; not because they had the least relish for walking exercise, under the circumstances, but because the hill, and the harness, and the mud, and the mail, were all so heavy, that the horses had three times already come to a stop, besides once drawing the coach across the road, with the mutinous intent of taking it back to Blackheath. Reins and whip and coachman and guard, however, in combination, had read that article of war which forbade a purpose otherwise strongly in favour of the argument, that some brute animals are endued with Reason; and the team had capitulated and returned to their duty.

With drooping heads and tremulous tails, they mashed their way through the thick mud, floundering and stumbling between whiles as if they were falling to pieces at the larger joints. As often as the driver rested them and brought them to a stand, with a wary "Wo-ho! so-ho then!" the near leader violently shook his head and everything upon it—like an unusually emphatic horse, denying that the coach could be got up the hill. Whenever the leader made this rattle, the passenger started, as a nervous passenger might, and was disturbed in mind.

There was a steaming mist in all the hollows, and it had roamed in its forlornness up the hill, like an evil spirit, seeking rest and finding none. A clammy and

intensely cold mist, it made its slow way through the air in ripples that visibly followed and overspread one another, as the waves of an unwholesome sea might do. It was dense enough to shut out everything from the light of the coach-lamps but these its own workings, and a few yards of road; and the reek of the labouring horses steamed into it, as if they had made it all.

Two other passengers, besides the one, were plodding up the hill by the side of the mail. All three were wrapped to the cheek-bones and over the ears, and wore jack-boots. Not one of the three could have said, from anything he saw, what either of the other two was like; and each was hidden under almost as many wrappers from the eyes of the mind, as from the eyes of the body, of his two companions. In those days, travellers were very shy of being confidential on a short notice, for anybody on the road might be a robber or in league with robbers. As to the latter, when every posting-house and ale-house could produce somebody in "the Captain's" pay, ranging from the landlord to the lowest stable nondescript, it was the likeliest thing upon the cards. So the guard of the Dover mail thought to himself, that Friday night in November one thousand seven hundred and seventy-five, lumbering up Shooter's Hill, as he stood on his own particular perch behind the mail, beating his feet and keeping an eye and a hand on the arm-chest before him, where a loaded blunderbuss lay at the top of six or eight loaded horse-pistols, deposited on a substratum of cutlass.

The Dover mail was in its usual genial position that the guard suspected the passengers, the passengers suspected one another and the guard, they all suspected everybody else, and the coachman was sure of nothing but the horses; as to which cattle he could with a clear conscience have taken his oath on the two Testaments that they were not fit for the journey.

"Wo-ho!" said the coachman. "So, then! One more pull and you're at the top and be damned to you, for I have had trouble enough to get you to it!—Joe!"

"Halloa!" the guard replied.

"What o'clock do you make it, Joe?"

"Ten minutes, good, past eleven."

"My blood!" ejaculated the vexed coachman, "and not atop of Shooter's yet? Tst! Yah! Get on with you!"

The emphatic horse, cut short by the whip in a most decided negative, made a decided scramble for it, and the three other horses followed suit. Once more, the Dover mail struggled on, with the jack-boots of its passengers squashing along by its side. They had stopped when the coach stopped, and they kept close company

with it. If any one of the three had had the hardihood to propose to another to walk on a little ahead into the mist and darkness, he would have put himself in a fair way of getting shot instantly as a highwayman.

The last burst carried the mail to the summit of the hill. The horses stopped to breathe again, and the guard got down to skid the wheel for the descent, and open the coach door to let the passengers in.

"Tst! Joe!" cried the coachman in a warning voice, looking down from his box.

"What do you say, Tom?"

They both listened.

"I say a horse at a canter coming up, Joe."

"I say a horse at a gallop, Tom," returned the guard, leaving his hold of the door, and mounting nimbly to his place. "Gentlemen! In the king's name, all of you!"

With this hurried adjuration, he cocked his blunderbuss, and stood on the offensive.

The passenger booked by this history was on the coach step, getting in; the two other passengers were close behind him, and about to follow. He remained on the step, half in the coach, and half out of it; they remained in the road below him. They all looked from the coachman to the guard, and from the guard to the coachman, and listened. The coachman looked back, and the guard looked back, and even the emphatic leader pricked up his ears and looked back, without contradicting.

The stillness consequent on the cessation of the rumbling and labouring of the coach, added to the stillness of the night, made it very quiet indeed. The panting of the horses communicated a tremulous motion to the coach, as if it were in a state of agitation. The hearts of the passengers beat loud enough perhaps to be heard; but at any rate, the quiet pause was audibly expressive of people out of breath, and holding the breath, and having the pulses quickened by expectation.

The sound of a horse at a gallop came fast and furiously up the hill.

"So-ho!" the guard sang out, as loud as he could roar. "Yo there! Stand! I shall fire!"

The pace was suddenly checked, and, with much splashing and floundering, a man's voice called from the mist, "Is that the Dover mail?"

"Never you mind what it is!" the guard retorted. "What are you?"

"Is that the Dover mail?"

"Why do you want to know?"

"I want a passenger, if it is."

"What passenger?"

“Mr. Jarvis Lorry.”

Our booked passenger showed in a moment that it was his name. The guard, the coachman, and the two other passengers, eyed him distrustfully.

“Keep where you are,” the guard called to the voice in the mist, “because, if I should make a mistake, it could never be set right in your lifetime. Gentleman of the name of Lorry answer straight.”

“What is the matter?” asked the passenger, then, with mildly quavering speech. “Who wants me. Is it Jerry?”

“I don’t like Jerry’s voice, if it is Jerry,” growled the guard to himself. “He’s hoarser than suits me, is Jerry.”

“Yes, Mr. Lorry.”

“What is the matter?”

“A despatch sent after you from over yonder. T. and Co.”

“I know this messenger, Guard,” said Mr. Lorry, getting down into the road—assisted from behind more swiftly than politely by the other two passengers, who immediately scrambled into the coach, shut the door, and pulled up the window. “He may come close; there’s nothing wrong.”

“I hope there ain’t, but I can’t make so ’Nation sure of that,” said the guard, in gruff soliloquy. “Halloa you!”

“Well! And halloa you!” said Jerry, more hoarsely than before.

“Come on at a footpace; d’ye mind me? And if you’ve got holsters to that saddle o’ yourn, don’t let me see your hand go nigh ’em. For I’m a Devil at a quick mistake, and when I make one it takes the form of Lead. So now let’s look at you.”

The figures of a horse and rider came slowly through the eddying mist, and came to the side of the mail, where the passenger stood. The rider stooped, and casting up his eyes at the guard, handed the passenger a small folded paper. The rider’s horse was blown, and both horse and rider were covered with mud, from the hoofs of the horse to the hat of the man.

“Guard!” said the passenger, in a tone of quiet business confidence.

The watchful guard, with his right hand at the stock of his raised blunderbuss, his left at the barrel, and his eye on the horseman, answered curtly, “Sir.”

“There is nothing to apprehend. I belong to Tellson’s Bank. You must know Tellson’s Bank in London. I am going to Paris on business. A crown to drink. I may read this?”

“If so be as you’re quick, sir.”

He opened it in the light of the coach-lamp on that side, and read—first to himself and then aloud: “ ‘Wait at Dover for Mam’selle.’ It’s not long, you see, guard. Jerry, say that my answer was, RECALLED TO LIFE.”

Jerry started in his saddle. “That’s a Blazing strange answer, too,” said he, at his hoarsest.

“Take that message back, and they will know that I received this, as well as if I wrote. Make the best of your way. Good night.”

With those words the passenger opened the coach-door and got in; not at all assisted by his fellow passengers, who had expeditiously secreted their watches and purses in their boots, and were now making a general pretence of being asleep. With no more definite purpose than to escape the hazard of originating any other kind of action.

The coach lumbered on again, with heavier wreaths of mist closing round it as it began the descent. The guard soon replaced his blunderbuss in his arm-chest, and, having looked to the rest of its contents, and having looked to the supplementary pistols that he wore in his belt, looked to a smaller chest beneath his seat, in which there were a few smith’s tools, a couple of torches, and a tinder-box. For he was furnished with that completeness, that if the coach lamps had been blown and stormed out, which did occasionally happen, he had only to shut himself up inside, keep the flint and steel sparks well off the straw, and get a light with tolerable safety and ease (if he were lucky) in five minutes.

“Tom!” softly over the coach-roof.

“Hallo, Joe.”

“Did you hear the message?”

“I did, Joe.”

“What did you make of it, Tom?”

“Nothing at all, Joe.”

“That’s a coincidence, too,” the guard mused, “for I made the same of it myself.”

Jerry, left alone in the mist and darkness, dismounted meanwhile, not only to ease his spent horse, but to wipe the mud from his face, and to shake the wet out of his hat-brim, which might be capable of holding about half a gallon. After standing with the bridle over his heavily-splashed arm, until the wheels of the mail were no longer within hearing and the night was quite still again, he turned to walk down the hill.

“After that there gallop from Temple-bar, old lady, I won’t trust your fore-legs till I get you on the level,” said this hoarse messenger, glancing at his mare. “ ‘Recalled to life.’ That’s a Blazing strange message. Much

of that wouldn't do for you, Jerry ! I say, Jerry ! You'd be in a Blazing bad way, if recalling to life was to come into fashion, Jerry !”

CHAPTER III.

The Night Shadows.

A WONDERFUL fact to reflect upon, that every human creature is constituted to be that profound secret and mystery to every other. A solemn consideration, when I enter a great city by night, that every one of those darkly clustered houses encloses its own secret ; that every room in every one of them encloses its own secret ; that every beating heart in the hundreds of thousands of breasts there, is, in some of its imaginings, a secret to the heart nearest it ! Something of the awfulness, even of Death itself, is referable to this. No more can I turn the leaves of this dear book that I loved, and vainly hope in time to read it all. No more can I look into the depths of this unfathomable water, wherein, as momentary lights glanced into it, I have had glimpses of buried treasure and other things submerged. It was appointed that the book should shut with a spring, for ever and for ever, when I had read but a page. It was appointed that the water should be locked in an eternal frost, when the light was playing on its surface, and I stood in ignorance on the shore. My friend is dead, my neighbour is dead, my love, the darling of my soul, is dead ; it is the inexorable consolidation and perpetuation of the secret that was always in that individuality, and which I shall carry in mine to my life's end. In any of the burial-places in this city through which I pass, is there a sleeper more inscrutable than its busy inhabitants are, in their innermost personality, to me, or than I am to them ?

As to this, his natural and not to be alienated inheritance, the messenger on horseback had exactly the same possessions as the King, the first Minister of State, or the richest merchant in London. So with the three passengers shut up in the narrow compass of one lumbering old mail coach ; they were mysteries to one another, as complete as if each had been in his own coach and six, or his own coach and sixty, with the breadth of a county between him and the next.

The messenger rode back at an easy trot, stopping pretty often at ale-houses by the way to drink, but evincing a tendency to keep his own counsel, and to keep his hat cocked over his eyes. He had eyes that assorted very well with that decoration, being of a surface black, with no depth in the colour or form, and much too near to-

gether—as if they were afraid of being found out in something, singly, if they kept too far apart. They had a sinister expression, under an old cocked-hat like a three-cornered spittoon, and over a great muffler for the chin and throat, which descended nearly to the wearer's knees. When he stopped for drink, he moved this muffler with his left hand, only while he poured his liquor in with his right; as soon as that was done, he muffled again.

“No, Jerry, no!” said the messenger, harping on one theme as he rode. “It wouldn't do for you, Jerry. Jerry, you honest tradesman, it wouldn't suit *your* line of business! Recalled—! Bust me if I don't think he'd been a drinking!”

His message perplexed his mind to that degree that he was fain, several times, to take off his hat to scratch his head. Except on the crown, which was raggedly bald, he had stiff, black hair, standing jaggedly all over it, and growing downhill almost to his broad, blunt nose. It was so like smith's work, so much more like the top of a strongly spiked wall than a head of hair, that the best of players at leap-frog might have declined him, as the most dangerous man in the world to go over.

While he trotted back with the message he was to deliver to the night watchman in his box at the door of Tellson's Bank, by Temple-bar, who was to deliver it to greater authorities within, the shadows of the night took such shapes to him as arose out of the message, and took such shapes to the mare as arose out of *her* private topics of uneasiness. They seemed to be numerous, for she shied at every shadow on the road.

What time, the mail-coach lumbered, jolted, rattled, and bumped upon its tedious way, with its three fellow inscrutables inside. To whom, likewise, the shadows of the night revealed themselves, in the forms their dozing eyes and wandering thoughts suggested.

Tellson's Bank had a run upon it in the mail. As the bank passenger—with an arm drawn through the leathern strap, which did what lay in it to keep him from pounding against the next passenger, and driving him into his corner, whenever the coach got a special jolt—nodded in his place with half-shut eyes, the little coach-windows, and the coach-lamp dimly gleaming through them, and the bulky bundle of opposite passenger, became the bank, and did a great stroke of business. The rattle of the harness was the chink of money, and more drafts were honoured in five minutes than even Tellson's, with all its foreign and home connexion, ever paid in thrice the time. Then the strong-rooms underground, at Tellson's, with such of their valuable stores and secrets as were known to the passenger (and it was not a little that he knew about them), opened before him, and he

went in among them with the great keys and the feebly-burning candle, and found them safe, and strong, and sound, and still, just as he had last seen them.

But, though the bank was almost always with him, and though the coach (in a confused way, like the presence of pain under an opiate) was always with him, there was another current of impression that never ceased to run, all through the night. He was on his way to dig some one out of a grave.

Now, which of the multitude of faces that showed themselves before him was the true face of the buried person, the shadows of the night did not indicate; but they were all the faces of a man of five-and-forty by years, and they differed principally in the passions they expressed, and in the ghastliness of their worn and wasted state. Pride, contempt, defiance, stubbornness, submission, lamentation, succeeded one another; so did varieties of sunken cheek, cadaverous colour, emaciated hands and fingers. But the face was in the main one face, and every head was prematurely white. A hundred times the dozing passenger inquired of this spectre:

“Buried how long?”

The answer was always the same: “Almost eighteen years.”

“You had abandoned all hope of being dug out?”

“Long ago.”

“You know that you are recalled to life?”

“They tell me so.”

“I hope you care to live?”

“I can’t say.”

“Shall I show her to you? Will you come and see her?”

The answers to this question were various and contradictory. Sometimes the broken reply was, “Wait! It would kill me if I saw her too soon.” Sometimes, it was given in a tender rain of tears, and then it was, “Take me to her.” Sometimes, it was staring and bewildered, and then it was, “I don’t know her. I don’t understand.”

After such imaginary discourse, the passenger in his fancy would dig, and dig, dig—now, with a spade, now with a great key, now with his hands—to dig this wretched creature out. Got out at last, with earth hanging about his face and hair, he would suddenly fall away to dust. The passenger would then start to himself, and lower the window, to get the reality of mist and rain on his cheek.

Yet even when his eyes were opened on the mist and rain, on the moving patch of light from the lamps, and the hedge at the roadside retreating by jerks, the night shadows outside the coach would fall into the train of the

night shadows within. The real Banking-house by Temple-bar, the real business of the past day, the real strong-rooms, the real express sent after him, and the real message returned, would all be there. Out of the midst of them, the ghostly face would rise, and he would accost it again.

“Buried how long?”

“Almost eighteen years.”

“I hope you care to live?”

“I can’t say.”

Dig—dig—dig—until an impatient movement from one of the two passengers would admonish him to pull up the window, draw his arm securely through the leathern strap, and speculate upon the two slumbering forms, until his mind lost its hold of them, and they again slid away into the bank and the grave.

“Buried how long?”

“Almost eighteen years.”

“You had abandoned all hope of being dug out?”

“Long ago.”

The words were still in his hearing as just spoken—distinctly in his hearing as ever spoken words had been in his life—when the weary passenger started to the consciousness of daylight, and found that the shadows of the night were gone.

He lowered the window, and looked out at the rising sun. There was a ridge of ploughed land, with a plough upon it where it had been left last night when the horses were unyoked; beyond, a quiet coppice-wood, in which many leaves of burning red and golden yellow still remained upon the trees. Though the earth was cold and wet, the sky was clear, and the sun rose bright, placid, and beautiful.

“Eighteen years!” said the passenger, looking at the sun. “Gracious Creator of Day! To be buried alive for eighteen years!”

CHAPTER IV.

The Preparation.

WHEN the mail got successfully to Dover, in the course of the forenoon, the head-drawer at the Royal George Hotel opened the coach-door as his custom was. He did it with some flourish of ceremony, for a mail journey from London in winter was an achievement to congratulate an adventurous traveller upon.

By that time, there was only one adventurous traveller left to be congratulated; for the two others had been set down at their respective roadside destinations. The

mildewy inside of the coach, with its damp and dirty straw, its disagreeable smell, and its obscurity, was rather like a larger dog-kennel. Mr. Lorry, the passenger, shaking himself out of it in chains of straw, a tangle of shaggy wrapper, flapping hat, and muddy legs, was rather like a larger sort of dog.

“There will be a packet to Calais to-morrow, drawer?”

“Yes, sir, if the weather holds and the wind sets tolerable fair. The tide will serve pretty nicely at about two in the afternoon, sir. Bed, sir?”

“I shall not go to bed till night; but I want a bedroom and a barber.

“And then breakfast, sir? Yes, sir. That way, sir, if you please. Show Concord! Gentleman’s valise and hot water to Concord. Pull off gentleman’s boots in Concord. (You will find a fine sea-coal fire, sir.) Fetch barber to Concord. Stir about there now, for Concord!”

The Concord bed-chamber being always assigned to a passenger by the mail, and passengers by the mail being always heavily wrapped up from head to foot, the room had the odd interest for the establishment of the Royal George, that although but one kind of man was seen to go into it, all kinds and varieties of men came out of it. Consequently, another drawer, and two porters, and several maids, and the landlady, were all loitering by accident at various points of the road between the Concord and the coffee-room, when a gentleman of sixty, formally dressed in a brown suit of clothes, pretty well worn, but very well kept, with large square cuffs and large flaps to the pockets, passed along on his way to his breakfast.

The coffee-room had no other occupant, that forenoon, than the gentleman in brown. His breakfast-table was drawn before the fire, and as he sat, with its light shining on him, waiting for his meal, he sat so still, that he might have been sitting for his portrait.

Very orderly and methodical he looked, with a hand on each knee, and a loud watch ticking a sonorous sermon under his flapped waistcoat, as though it pitted its gravity and longevity against the levity and evanescence of the brisk fire. He had a good leg, and was a little vain of it, for his brown stockings fitted sleek and close, and were of a fine texture; his shoes and buckles, too, though plain, were trim. He wore an odd little sleek crisp flaxen wig, setting very close to his head; which wig, it is to be presumed, was made of hair, but which looked far more as though it were spun from filaments of silk or glass. His linen, though not of a fineness in accordance with his stockings, was as white as the tops of the waves that broke upon the neighbouring beach, or the specks of sail that glinted in the sunlight far at

sea. A face habitually suppressed and quieted, was still lighted up under the quaint wig by a pair of moist bright eyes that it must have cost their owner, in years gone by, some pains to drill to the composed and reserved expression of Tellson's Bank. He had a healthy colour in his cheeks, and his face, though lined, bore few traces of anxiety. But, perhaps the confidential bachelor clerks in Tellson's Bank were principally occupied with the cares of other people; and perhaps second-hand cares, like second-hand clothes, come easily off and on.

Completing his resemblance to a man who was sitting for his portrait, Mr. Lorry dropped off asleep. The arrival of his breakfast roused him, and he said to the drawer, as he moved his chair to it:

"I wish accommodation prepared for a young lady who may come here at any time to-day. She may ask for Mr. Jarvis Lorry, or she may only ask for a gentleman from Tellson's Bank. Please to let me know."

"Yes, sir. Tellson's Bank in London, sir?"

"Yes."

"Yes, sir. We have oftentimes the honour to entertain your gentlemen in their travelling backwards and forwards betwixt London and Paris, sir. A vast deal of travelling, sir, in Tellson and Company's House."

"Yes. We are quite a French house, as well as an English one."

"Yes, sir. Not much in the habit of such travelling yourself, I think, sir?"

"Not of late years. It is fifteen years since we—since I—came last from France."

"Indeed, sir? That was before my time here, sir. Before our people's time here, sir. The George was in other hands at that time, sir."

"I believe so."

"But I would hold a pretty wager, sir, that a House like Tellson and Company was flourishing, a matter of fifty, not to speak of fifteen years ago?"

"You might treble that, and say a hundred and fifty, yet not be far from the truth."

"Indeed, sir!"

Rounding his mouth and both his eyes, as he stepped backward from the table, the waiter shifted his napkin from his right arm to his left, dropped into a comfortable attitude, and stood surveying the guest while he ate and drank, as from an observatory or watch-tower. According to the immemorial usage of waiters in all ages.

When Mr. Lorry had finished his breakfast, he went out for a stroll on the beach. The little narrow, crooked town of Dover hid itself away from the beach, and ran its head into the chalk cliffs, like a marine ostrich. The beach was a desert of heaps of sea and stones tumbling

wildly about, and the sea did what it liked, and what it liked was destruction. It thundered at the town, and thundered at the cliffs, and brought the coast down, madly. The air among the houses was of so strong a piscatory flavour that one might have supposed sick fish went up to be dipped in it, as sick people went down to be dipped in the sea. A little fishing was done in the port, and a quantity of strolling about by night, and looking seaward; particularly at those times when the tide made, and was near flood. Small tradesmen, who did no business whatever, sometimes unaccountably realized large fortunes, and it was remarkable that nobody in the neighbourhood could endure a lamplighter.

As the day declined into the afternoon, and the air, which had been at intervals clear enough to allow the French coast to be seen, became again charged with mist and vapour, Mr. Lorry's thoughts seemed to cloud too. When it was dark, and he sat before the coffee-room fire, awaiting his dinner as he had awaited his breakfast, his mind was busily digging, digging, digging, in the live red coals.

A bottle of good claret after dinner does a digger in the red coals no harm, otherwise than as it has a tendency to throw him out of work. Mr. Lorry had been idle a long time, and had just poured out his last glassful of wine with as complete an appearance of satisfaction as is ever to be found in an elderly gentleman of a fresh complexion who has got to the end of a bottle, when a rattling of wheels came up the narrow street, and rumbled into the inn-yard.

He set down his glass untouched. "This is mam'selle!" said he.

In a very few minutes the waiter came in, to announce that Miss Manette had arrived from London, and would be happy to see the gentleman from Tellson's.

"So soon?"

Miss Manette had taken some refreshment on the road, and required none then, and was extremely anxious to see the gentleman from Tellson's immediately, if it suited his pleasure and convenience.

The gentleman from Tellson's had nothing left for it but to empty his glass with an air of stolid desperation, settle his odd little flaxen wig at the ears, and follow the waiter to Miss Manette's apartment. It was a large, dark room, furnished in a funereal manner with black horsehair, and loaded with heavy dark tables. These had been oiled and oiled, until the two tall candles on the table in the middle of the room were gloomily reflected on every leaf; as if *they* were buried, in deep graves of black mahogany, and no light to speak of could be expected from them until they were dug out.

The obscurity was so difficult to penetrate that Mr. Lorry picking his way over the well-worn Turkey carpet, supposed Miss Manette to be, for the moment, in some adjacent room, until, having got past the two tall candles, he saw standing to receive him by the table between them and the fire, a young lady of not more than seventeen, in a riding-cloak, and still holding her straw travelling-hat by its ribbon in her hand. As his eyes rested on a short, slight, pretty figure, a quantity of golden hair, a pair of blue eyes that met his own with an inquiring look, and a forehead with a singular capacity (remembering how young and smooth it was), of lifting and knitting itself into an expression that was not quite one of perplexity, or wonder, or alarm, or merely of a bright fixed attention, though it included all the four expressions—as his eyes rested on these things, a sudden vivid likeness passed before him, of a child whom he had held in his arms on the passage across that very Channel, one cold time, when the hail drifted heavily and the sea ran high. The likeness passed away, say, like a breath along the surface of a gaunt pier glass behind her, on the frame of which, a hospital procession of negro cupids, several headless and all cripples, were offering black baskets of Dead Sea fruit to black divinities of the feminine gender—and he made his formal bow to Miss Manette.

“Pray take a seat, sir.” In a very clear and pleasant young voice: a little foreign in its accent, but a very little indeed.

“I kiss your hand, miss,” said Mr. Lorry, with the manners of an earlier date, as he made his formal bow again, and took his seat.

“I received a letter from the Bank, sir, yesterday, informing me that some intelligence—or discovery—”

“The word is not material, miss; either word will do.”

“—respecting the small property of my poor father whom I never saw—so long dead—”

Mr. Lorry moved in his chair, and cast a troubled look towards the hospital procession of negro cupids. As if *they* had any help for anybody in their absurd baskets!

“—rendered it necessary that I should go to Paris, there to communicate with a gentleman of the Bank, so good as to be despatched to Paris for the purpose.”

“Myself.”

“As I was prepared to hear, sir.”

She curtsied to him (young ladies made curtsies in these days), with a pretty desire to convey to him that she felt how much older and wiser he was than she. He made her another bow.

“I replied to the Bank, sir, that as it was considered necessary, by those who know, and who are so kind as to

advise me, that I should go to France, and that as I am an orphan and have no friend who could go with me, I should esteem it highly if I might be permitted to place myself during the journey, under that worthy gentleman's protection. The gentleman had left London, but I think a messenger was sent after him to beg the favour of his waiting for me here."

"I was happy," said Mr. Lorry, "to be entrusted with the charge. I shall be more happy to execute it."

"Sir, I thank you indeed. I thank you very gratefully. It was told me by the Bank that the gentleman would explain to me the details of the business, and that I must prepare myself to find them of a surprising nature. I have done my best to prepare myself, and I naturally have a strong and eager interest to know what they are."

"Naturally," said Mr. Lorry. "Yes—I—"

After a pause, he added, again settling the crisp flaxen wig at the ears :

"It is very difficult to begin."

He did not begin, but, in his indecision, met her glance. The young forehead lifted itself into that singular expression—but it was pretty and characteristic, besides being singular—and she raised her hand, as if with an involuntary action she caught at, or stayed, some passing shadow.

"Are you quite a stranger to me, sir?"

"Am I not?" Mr. Lorry opened his hands, and extended them outward with an argumentative smile.

Between the eyebrows and just over the little feminine nose, the line of which was as delicate and fine as it was possible to be, the expression deepened itself as she took her seat thoughtfully in the chair by which she had hitherto remained standing. He watched her as she mused, and the moment she raised her eyes again, went on :

"In your adopted country, I presume, I cannot do better than address you as a young English lady, Miss Manette?"

"If you please, sir."

"Miss Manette, I am a man of business. I have a business charge to acquit myself of. In your reception of it, don't heed me any more than if I was a speaking machine—truly, I am not much else. I will, with your leave, relate to you, miss, the story of one of our customers."

"Story!"

He seemed wilfully to mistake the word she had repeated, when he added, in a hurry, "Yes, customers; in the banking business we usually call our connexion our customers. He was a French gentleman; a scien-

tific gentleman ; a man of great acquirements—a doctor.”

“Not of Beauvais?”

“Why yes, of Beauvais. Like Monsieur Manette, your father, the gentleman was of Beauvais. Like Monsieur Manette, your father, the gentleman was of repute in Paris. I had the honour of knowing him there. Our relations were business relations, but confidential. I was at that time in our French House, and had been—oh ! twenty years.”

“At that time—I may ask, at what time, sir?”

“I speak, miss, of twenty years ago. He married—an English lady—and I was one of the trustees. His affairs, like the affairs of many other French gentlemen and French families, were entirely in Tellson’s hands. In a similar way, I am, or I have been, trustee of one kind or other for scores of our customers. These are mere business relations, miss ; there is no friendship in them, no particular interest, nothing like sentiment. I have passed from one to another, in the course of my business life, just as I pass from one of our customers to another in the course of my business day ; in short, I have no feelings ; I am a mere machine. To go on—”

“But this is my father’s story, sir ; and I begin to think”—the curiously roughened forehead was very intent upon him—“that when I was left an orphan through my mother’s surviving my father only two years, it was you who brought me to England. I am almost sure it was you.”

Mr. Lorry took the hesitating little hand that confidently advanced to take his, and he put it with some ceremony to his lips. He then conducted the young lady straightway to her chair again, and, holding the chair-back with his left hand, and using his right by turns to rub his chin, pull his wig at the ears, or point what he said, stood looking down into her face while she sat looking up into his.

“Miss Manette, it *was* I. And you will see how truly I spoke of myself just now, in saying I had no feelings, and that all the relations I hold with my fellow-creatures are mere business relations, when you reflect that I have never seen you since. No ; you have been the ward of Tellson’s House since, and I have been busy with the other business of Tellson’s House since. Feelings ! I have no time for them, no chance of them. I pass my whole life, miss, in turning an immense pecuniary Mangle.”

After this odd description of his daily routine of employment, Mr. Lorry flattened his flaxen wig upon his head with both hands (which was most unnecessary, for

nothing could be flatter than its shining surface was before), and resumed his former attitude.

“So far, miss (as you have remarked), this is the story of your regretted father. Now comes the difference. If your father had not died when he did— Don’t be frightened! How you start!”

She did, indeed, start. And she caught his wrist with both her hands.

“Pray,” said Mr. Lorry, in a soothing tone, bringing his left hand from the back of the chair to lay it on the supplicatory fingers that clasped him in so violent a tremble, “pray control your agitation—a matter of business. As I was saying—”

Her look so discomposed him that he stopped, wandered, and began anew:

“As I was saying; if Monsieur Manette had not died; if he had suddenly and silently disappeared; if he had been spirited away; if it had not been difficult to guess to what dreadful place, though no art could trace him; if he had an enemy in some compatriot who could exercise a privilege that I in my own time have known the boldest people afraid to speak of in a whisper, across the water there; for instance, the privilege of filling up blank forms for the consignment of any one to the oblivion of a prison for any length of time; if his wife had implored the king, the queen, the court, the clergy, for any tidings of him, and all quite in vain; then the history of your father would have been the history of this unfortunate gentleman, the Doctor of Beauvais.”

“I entreat you to tell me more, sir.”

“I will. I am going to. You can bear it?”

“I can bear anything but the uncertainty you leave me in at this moment.”

“You speak collectedly, and you—*are* collected. That’s good!” (Though his manner was less satisfied than his words.) “A matter of business. Regard it as a matter of business—business that must be done. Now, if this Doctor’s wife, though a lady of great courage and spirit, had suffered so intensely from this cause before her little child was born—”

“The little child was a daughter, sir.”

“A daughter. A—a—matter of business—don’t be distressed. Miss, if the poor lady had suffered so intensely before her little child was born, that she came to the determination of sparing the poor child the inheritance of any part of the agony she had known the pains of, by rearing her in the belief that her father was dead— No, don’t kneel! In Heaven’s name why should you kneel to me!”

“For the truth. O dear, good, compassionate sir, for the truth!”

“A—a matter of business. You confuse me, and how can I transact business if I am confused? Let us be clear-headed. If you could kindly mention now, for instance, what nine times ninepence are, or how many shillings in twenty guineas, it would be so encouraging. I should be so much more at my ease about your state of mind.”

Without directly answering to this appeal, she sat so still when he had very gently raised her, and the hands that had not ceased to clasp his wrists were so much more steady than they had been, that she communicated some reassurance to Mr. Jarvis Lorry.

“That’s right, that’s right. Courage! Business! You have business before you; useful business. Miss Manette, your mother took this course with you. And when she died—I believe, broken-hearted—having never slackened her unavailing search for your father, she left you, at two years old, to grow to be blooming, beautiful, and happy, without the dark cloud upon you of living in uncertainty whether your father soon wore his heart out in prison, or wasted there through many lingering years.”

As he said the words, he looked down, with an admiring pity, on the flowing golden hair; as if he pictured to himself that it might have been already tinged with grey.

“You know that your parents had no great possession, and that what they had was secured to your mother and to you. There has been no new discovery, of money, or of any other property; but—”

He felt his wrist held closer, and he stopped. The expression in the forehead, which had so particularly attracted his notice, and which was now immovable, had deepened into one of pain and horror.

“But he has been—been found. He is alive. Greatly changed it is too probable; almost a wreck, it is possible; though we will hope the best. Still, alive. Your father has been taken to the house of an old servant in Paris, and we are going there: I, to identify him, if I can: you, to restore him to life, love, duty, rest, comfort.”

A shiver ran through her frame, and from it through his. She said, in a low, distinct, awe-stricken voice, as if she were saying it in a dream.

“I am going to see his Ghost! It will be his Ghost—not him!”

Mr. Lorry quietly chafed the hands that held his arm. “There, there, there! See now, see now! The best and the worst are known to you now. You are well on your way to the poor wronged gentleman, and, with a

fair sea voyage, and a fair land journey, you will be soon at his dear side."

She repeated in the same tone, sunk to a whisper, "I have been free, I have been happy, yet his Ghost has never haunted me!"

"Only one thing more," said Mr. Lorry, laying stress upon it as a wholesome means of enforcing her attention: "he has been found under another name; his own, long forgotten or long concealed. It would be worse than useless now to inquire which; worse than useless to seek to know whether he has been for years overlooked, or always designedly held prisoner. It would be worse than useless now to make any inquiries, because it would be dangerous. Better not to mention the subject, anywhere or in any way, and to remove him—for a while at all events—out of France. Even I, safe as an Englishman, and even Tellson's, important as they are to French credit, avoid all naming of the matter. I carry about me, not a scrap of writing openly referring to it. This is a secret service altogether. My credentials, entries, and memoranda, are all comprehended in the one line, 'Recalled to Life;' which may mean anything. But what is the matter! She doesn't notice a word! Miss Manette!"

Perfectly still and silent, and not even fallen back in her chair, she sat under his hand, utterly insensible; with her eyes open and fixed upon him, and with that last expression looking as if it were carved or branded into her forehead. So close was her hold upon his arm, that he feared to detach himself lest he should hurt her; therefore he called out loudly for assistance without moving.

A wild-looking woman, whom even in his agitation Mr. Lorry observed to be all of a red colour, and to have red hair, and to be dressed in some extraordinary tight-fitting fashion, and to have on her head a most wonderful bonnet like a Grenadier wooden measure, and good measure too, or a great Stilton cheese, came running into the room in advance of the inn servants, and soon settled the question of his detachment from the poor young lady, by laying a brawny hand upon his chest, and sending him flying back against the nearest wall.

("I really think this must be a man!" was Mr. Lorry's breathless reflection, simultaneously with his coming against the wall.)

"Why, look at you, all!" bawled this figure, addressing the inn servants. "Why don't you go and fetch things, instead of standing there staring at me? I am not so much to look at, am I? Why don't you go and fetch things? I'll let you know, if you don't bring smelling-salts, cold water, and vinegar, quick, I will!"

There was an immediate dispersal for these restoratives, and she softly laid the patient on a sofa, and tended her with great skill and gentleness: calling her "my precious!" and "my bird!" and spreading her golden hair aside over her shoulders with great pride and care.

"And you in brown!" she said, indignantly turning to Mr. Lorry; "couldn't you tell her what you had to tell her, without frightening her to death? Look at her, with her pretty pale face and her cold hands. Do you call *that* being a Banker?"

Mr. Lorry was so exceedingly disconcerted by a question so hard to answer, that he could only look on, at a distance, with much feebler sympathy and humility, while the strong woman, having banished the inn servants under the mysterious penalty of "letting them know" something not mentioned if they stayed there, staring, recover her charge by a regular series of gradations, and coaxed her to lay her drooping head upon her shoulder.

"I hope she will do well now," said Mr. Lorry.

"No thanks to you in brown, if she does. My darling pretty!"

"I hope," said Mr. Lorry, after another pause of feeble sympathy and humility, "that you accompany Miss Manette to France?"

"A likely thing, too!" replied the strong woman. "If it was ever intended that I should go across salt water, do you suppose Providence would have cast my lot in an island?"

This being another question hard to answer, Mr. Jarvis Lorry withdrew to consider it.

CHAPTER V.

The Wine-shop.

A LARGE cask of wine had been dropped and broken, in the street. The accident had happened in getting it out of a cart; the cask had tumbled out with a run, the hoops had burst, and it lay on the stones just outside the door of the wine-shop, shattered like a walnut-shell.

All the people within reach had suspended their business, or their idleness, to run to the spot and drink the wine. The rough, irregular stones of the street, pointing every way, and designed, one might have thought, expressly to lame all living creatures that approached them, had dammed it into little pools; these were sur-



THE WINE-SHOP.

—A Tale of Two Cities, Vol. Eleven, page 27.

rounded, each by its own jostling group or crowd, according to its size. Some men kneeled down, made scoops of their two hands joined, and sipped, or tried to help women, who bent over their shoulders, to sip, before the wine had all run out between their fingers. Others, men and women, dipped in the puddles with little mugs of mutilated earthenware, or even with handkerchiefs from women's heads, which were squeezed dry into infants' mouths; others made small mud-embankments, to stem the wine as it ran; others, directed by lookers-on up at high windows, darted here and there, to cut off little streams of wine that started away in new directions; others, devoted themselves to the sodden and lee-dyed pieces of the cask, licking, and even champ-ing the moister wine-rotted fragments with eager relish. There was no drainage to carry off the wine, and not only did it all get taken up, but so much mud got taken up along with it, that there might have been a scavenger in the street, if anybody acquainted with it could have believed in such a miraculous presence.

A shrill sound of laughter and of amused voices—voices of men, women, and children—resounded in the street while this wine-game lasted. There was little roughness in the sport, and much playfulness. There was a special companionship in it, an observable inclination on the part of every one to join some other one, which led, especially among the luckier or lighter-hearted, to frolic-some embraces, drinking of healths, shaking of hands, and even joining of hands and dancing, a dozen together. When the wine was gone, and the places where it had been most abundant were raked into a gridiron-pattern by fingers, these demonstrations ceased, as suddenly as they had broken out. The man who had left his saw sticking in the fire-wood he was cutting, set it in motion again; the woman who had left on a door-step the little pot of hot-ashes, at which she had been trying to soften the pain in her own starved fingers and toes, or in those of her child, returned to it; men with bare arms, matted locks, and cadaverous faces, who had emerged into the winter light from cellars, moved away to descend again; and a gloom gathered on the scene that appeared more natural to it than sunshine.

The wine was red wine, and had stained the ground of the narrow street in the suburb of Saint Antoine, in Paris, where it was spilled. It had stained many hands, too, and many faces, and many naked feet, and many wooden shoes. The hands of the man who sawed the wood, left red marks on the billets; and the forehead of the woman who nursed her baby, was stained with the stain of the old rag she wound about her head again. Those who had been greedy with the staves of the cask, had

acquired a tigerish smear about the mouth ; and one tall joker so besmirched, his head more out of a long squalid bag of a nightcap than in it, scrawled upon a wall with his finger dipped in muddy wine lees—BLOOD.

The time was to come, when that wine too would be spilled on the street-stones, and when the stain of it would be red upon many there.

And now that the cloud settled on Saint Antoine, which a momentary gleam had driven from his sacred countenance, the darkness of it was heavy—cold, dirt, sickness, ignorance, and want, were the lords in waiting on the saintly presence—nobles of great power all of them ; but, most especially the last. Samples of a people that had undergone a terrible grinding and regrinding in the mill, and certainly not in the fabulous mill which ground old people young, shivered at every corner, passed in and out at every doorway, looked from every window, fluttered in every vestige of a garment that the wind shook. The mill which had worked them down, was the mill that grinds young people old ; the children had ancient faces and grave voices ; and upon them, and upon the grown faces, and ploughed into every furrow of age and coming up afresh, was the sign, Hunger. It was prevalent everywhere. Hunger was pushed out of the tall houses, in the wretched clothing that hung upon poles and lines ; Hunger was patched into them with straw and rag and wood and paper ; Hunger was repeated in every fragment of the small modicum of firewood that the man sawed off ; Hunger stared down from the smokeless chimneys, and started up from the filthy street that had no offal, among its refuse, of anything to eat. Hunger was the inscription on the baker's shelves, written in every small loaf of his scanty stock of bad bread ; at the sausage-shop, in every dead dog preparation that was offered for sale. Hunger rattled its dry bones among the roasting chestnuts in the turned cylinder ; Hunger was shred into atomies in every farthing porringer of husky chips of potato, fried with some reluctant drops of oil.

Its abiding-place was in all things fitted to it. A narrow winding street, full of offence and stench, with other narrow winding streets diverging, all peopled by rags and nightcaps, and all smelling of rags and nightcaps, and all visible things with a brooding look upon them that looked ill. In the hunted air of the people there was yet some wild-beast thought of the possibility of turning at bay. Depressed and slinking though they were, eyes of fire were not wanting among them ; nor compressed lip, white with what they suppressed ; nor foreheads knitted into the likeness of the gallows-rope they mused about enduring, or inflicting. The trade-signs (and they were almost as many as the shops), were,

all, grim illustrations of Want. The butcher and the porkman painted up, only the leanest scraggs of meat; the baker, the coarsest of meagre loaves. The people rudely pictured as drinking in the wine-shops, croaked over their scanty measures of thin wine and beer, and were gloweringly confidential together. Nothing was represented in a flourishing condition, save tools and weapons; but, the cutler's knives and axes were sharp and bright, the smith's hammers were heavy, and the gunmaker's stock was murderous. The crippling stones of the pavement, with their many little reservoirs of mud and water, had no footways, but broke off abruptly at the doors. The kennel, to make amends, ran down the middle of the street—when it ran at all: which was only after heavy rains, and then it ran, by many eccentric fits, into the houses. Across the streets, at wide intervals, one clumsy lamp was slung by a rope and pulley: at night, when the lamplighter had let these down, and lighted, and hoisted them again, a feeble grove of dim wicks swung in a sickly manner overhead, as if they were at sea. Indeed they were at sea, and the ship and crew were in peril of tempest.

For, the time was to come, when the gaunt scarecrows of that region should have watched the lamplighter, in their idleness and hunger, so long, as to conceive the idea of improving on his method, and hauling up men by those ropes and pulleys, to flare upon the darkness of their condition. But, the time was not come yet; and every wind that blew over France shook the rags of the scarecrows in vain, for the birds, fine of song and feather, took no warning.

The wine-shop was a corner shop, better than most others in its appearance and degree, and the master of the wine-shop had stood outside it, in a yellow waistcoat and green breeches, looking on at the struggle for the lost wine. "It's not my affair," said he, with a final shrug of his shoulders. "The people from the market did it. Let them bring another."

"There, his eyes happening to catch the tall joker writing up his joke, he called to him across the way:

"Say, then, my Gaspard, what do you do there?"

The fellow pointed to his joke with immense significance, as is often the way with his tribe. It missed its mark, and completely failed, as is often the way with his tribe too.

"What now? Are you a subject for the mad-hospital?" said the wine-shop keeper, crossing the road, and obliterating the jest with a handful of mud, picked up for the purpose, and smeared over it. "Why do you write in the public streets? Is there—tell me thou—is there no other place to write such words in?"

In his expostulation he dropped his cleaner hand (perhaps accidentally, perhaps not), upon the joker's heart. The joker rapped with his own, took a nimble spring upward, and came down in a fantastic dancing attitude, with one of his stained shoes jerked off his foot into his hand, and held out. A joker of an extremely, not to say wolfishly, practical character, he looked, under those circumstances.

"Put it on, put it on," said the other. "Call wine, wine; and finish there." With that advice, he wiped his soiled hand upon the joker's dress, such as it was—quite deliberately, as having dirtied the hand on his account; and then re-crossed the road and entered the wine-shop.

The wine-shop keeper was a bull-necked, martial-looking man of thirty, and he should have been of a hot temperament, for, although it was a bitter day, he wore no coat, but carried one slung over his shoulder. His shirt-sleeves were rolled up, too, and his brown arms were bare to the elbows. Neither did he wear anything more on his head than his own crisply-curling short dark hair. He was a dark man altogether, with good eyes and a good bold breadth between them. Good-humoured-looking on the whole, but implacable-looking, too; evidently a man of a strong resolution and a set purpose; a man not desirable to be met rushing down a narrow pass with a gulf on either side, for nothing would turn the man.

Madame Defarge, his wife, sat in the shop behind the counter as he came in. Madame Defarge was a stout woman of about his own age, with a watchful eye that seldom seemed to look at anything, a large hand heavily ringed, a steady face, strong features, and great composure of manner. There was a character about Madame Defarge, from which one might have predicated that she did not often make mistakes against herself in any of the reckonings over which she presided. Madame Defarge being sensitive to cold, was wrapped in fur, and had a quantity of bright shawl twined about her head, though not to the concealment of her large ear-rings. Her knitting was before her, but she had laid it down to pick her teeth with a tooth-pick. Thus engaged, with her right elbow supported by her left hand, Madame Defarge said nothing when her lord came in, but coughed just one grain of cough. This, in combination with the lifting of her darkly defined eyebrows over her toothpick by the breadth of a line, suggested to her husband that he would do well to look round the shop among the customers, for any new customer who had dropped in while he stepped over the way.

The wine-shop keeper accordingly rolled his eyes

about, until they rested upon an elderly gentleman and a young lady, who were seated in a corner. Other company were there: two playing cards, two playing dominoes, three standing by the counter lengthening out a short supply of wine. As he passed behind the counter, he took notice that the elderly gentleman said in a look to the young lady, "This is our man."

"What the devil do *you* do in that galley there!" said Monsieur Defarge to himself; "I don't know you."

But he feigned not to notice the two strangers, and fell into discourse with the triumvirate of customers who were drinking at the counter.

"How goes it, Jacques?" said one of these three to Monsieur Defarge. "Is all the spilt wine swallowed?"

"Every drop, Jacques," answered Monsieur Defarge.

When this interchange of christian name was effected, Madame Defarge, picking her teeth with her toothpick, coughed another grain of cough, and raised her eyebrows by the breadth of another line.

"It is not often," said the second of the three, addressing Monsieur Defarge, "that many of these miserable beasts know the taste of wine, or of anything but black bread and death. Is it not so, Jacques?"

"It is so, Jacques," Monsieur Defarge returned.

At this second interchange of the christian name, Madame Defarge, still using her toothpick with profound composure, coughed another grain of cough, and raised her eyebrows by the breadth of another line.

The last of the three now said his say, as he put down his empty drinking vessel and smacked his lips.

"Ah! So much the worse! A bitter taste it is that such poor cattle always have in their mouths, and hard lives they live, Jacques. Am I right, Jacques?"

"You are right, Jacques," was the response of Monsieur Defarge.

This third interchange of the christian name was completed at the moment when Madame Defarge put her toothpick by, kept her eyebrows up, and slightly rustled in her seat.

"Hold then! True!" muttered her husband. "Gentlemen—my wife!"

The three customers pulled off their hats to Madame Defarge, with three flourishes. She acknowledged their homage by bending her head, and giving them a quick look. Then she glanced in a casual manner round the wine-shop, took up her knitting with great apparent calmness and repose of spirit, and became absorbed in it.

"Gentlemen," said her husband, who had kept his bright eye observantly upon her, "good day. The chamber, furnished bachelor-fashion, that you wished to see, and were inquiring for when I stepped out, is on

the fifth floor. The doorway of the staircase gives on the little court-yard close to the left here," pointing with his hand, "near to the window of my establishment. But, now that I remember, one of you has already been there, and can show the way. Gentlemen, adieu!"

They paid for their wine, and left the place. The eyes of Monsieur Defarge were studying his wife at her knitting, when the elderly gentleman advanced from his corner, and begged the favour of a word.

"Willingly, sir," said Monsieur Defarge, and quietly stepped with him to the door.

Their conference was very short, but very decided. Almost at the first word, Monsieur Defarge started and became deeply attentive. It had not lasted a minute, when he nodded and went out. The gentleman then beckoned to the young lady, and they, too, went out. Madame Defarge knitted with nimble fingers and steady eyebrows, and saw nothing.

Mr. Jarvis Lorry and Miss Manette, emerging from the wine-shop thus, joined Monsieur Defarge in the doorway to which he had directed his other company just before. It opened from a stinking little black court-yard, and was the general public entrance to a great pile of houses, inhabited by a great number of people. In the gloomy tile-paved entry to the gloomy tile-paved staircase, Monsieur Defarge bent down on one knee to the child of his old master, and put her hand to his lips. It was a gentle action, but not at all gently done; a very remarkable transformation had come over him in a few seconds. He had no good humour in his face, nor any openness of aspect left, but had become a secret, angry, dangerous man.

"It is very high; it is a little difficult. Better to begin slowly." Thus, Monsieur Defarge, in a stern voice, to Mr. Lorry, as they began ascending the stairs.

"Is he alone?" the latter whispered.

"Alone! God help him who should be with him!" said the other, in the same low voice.

"Is he always alone, then?"

"Yes."

"Of his own desire?"

"Of his own necessity. As he was when I first saw him after they found me and demanded to know if I would take him, and, at my peril be discreet—as he was then, so he is now."

"He is greatly changed?"

"Changed!"

The keeper of the wine-shop stopped to strike the wall with his hand, and mutter a tremendous curse. No direct answer could have been half so forcible. Mr.

Lorry's spirits grew heavier and heavier, as he and his two companions ascended higher and higher.

Such a staircase, with its accessories, in the older and more crowded parts of Paris, would be bad enough now; but, at that time, it was vile indeed to unaccustomed and unhardened senses. Every little habitation within the great foul nest of one high building—that is to say, the room or rooms within every door that opened on the general staircase—left its own heap of refuse on its own landing, besides flinging other refuse from its own windows. The uncontrollable and hopeless mass of decomposition so engendered, would have polluted the air, even if poverty and deprivation had not loaded it with their intangible impurities; the two bad sources combined made it almost insupportable. Through such an atmosphere, by a steep dark shaft of dirt and poison, the way lay. Yielding to his own disturbance of mind, and to his young companion's agitation, which became greater every instant, Mr. Jarvis Lorry twice stopped to rest. Each of these stoppages was made at a doleful grating, by which any languishing good airs that were left uncorrupted, seemed to escape, and all spoilt and sickly vapours seemed to crawl in. Through the rusted bars, tastes, rather than glimpses, were caught of the jumbled neighbourhood; and nothing within range, nearer or lower than the summits of the two great towers of Notre-Dame, had any promise on it of healthy life or wholesome aspirations.

At last, the top of the staircase was gained, and they stopped for the third time. There was yet an upper staircase, of a steeper inclination and of contracted dimensions, to be ascended, before the garret story was reached. The keeper of the wine-shop, always going a little in advance, and always going on the side which Mr. Lorry took, as though he dreaded to be asked any questions by the young lady, turned himself about here, and, carefully feeling in the pockets of the coat he carried over his shoulder, took out a key.

"The door is locked then, my friend?" said Mr. Lorry, surprised.

"Ay. Yes," was the grim reply of Monsieur Defarge.

"You think it necessary to keep the unfortunate gentleman so retired?"

"I think it necessary to turn the key." Monsieur Defarge whispered it closer in his ear, and frowned heavily.

"Why?"

"Why! Because he has lived so long, locked up, that he would be frightened—rave—tear himself to pieces—die—come to I know not what harm—if his door was left open."

"Is it possible!" exclaimed Mr. Lorry.

“Is it possible?” repeated Defarge, bitterly. “Yes. And a beautiful world we live in, when it *is* possible, and when many other such things are possible, and not only possible, but done—done, see you!—under that sky there, every day. Long live the Devil. Let us go on.”

This dialogue had been held in so very low a whisper that not a word of it had reached the young lady’s ears. But, by this time she trembled under such strong emotion, and her face expressed such deep anxiety, and, above all, such dread and terror, that Mr. Lorry felt it incumbent on him to speak a word or two of reassurance.

“Courage, dear Miss! Courage! Business! The worst will be over in a moment; it is but passing the room door, and the worst is over. Then, all the good you bring to him, all the relief, all the happiness you bring to him, begin. Let our good friend here, assist you on that side. That’s well, friend Defarge. Come, now. Business, business!”

They went up slowly and softly. The staircase was short, and they were soon at the top. There, as it had an abrupt turn in it, they came all at once in sight of three men, whose heads were bent down close together at the side of a door, and who were intently looking into the room to which the door belonged, through some chinks or holes in the wall. On hearing footsteps close at hand these three turned, and rose, and showed themselves to be the three of one name who had been drinking in the wine-shop.

“I forgot them in the surprise of your visit,” explained Monsieur Defarge. “Leave us, good boys; we have business here.”

The three glided by, and went silently down.

There appearing to be no other door on that floor, and the keeper of the wine-shop going straight to this one when they were left alone, Mr. Lorry asked him in a whisper, with a little anger:

“Do you make a show of Monsieur Manette?”

“I show him, in the way you have seen, to a chosen few.”

“Is that well?”

“I think it is well.”

“Who are the few? How do you choose them?”

“I choose them as real men, of my name—Jacques is my name—to whom the sight is likely to do good. Enough; you are English; that is another thing. Stay there, if you please, a little moment.”

With an admonitory gesture to keep them back, he stooped, and looked in through the crevice in the wall. Soon raising his head again, he struck twice or thrice upon the door—evidently with no other object than to **make** a noise there. With the same intention, he drew

the key across it, three or four times, before he put it clumsily into the lock, and turned it as heavily as he could.

The door slowly opened inward under his hand, and he looked into the room and said something. A faint voice answered something. Little more than a single syllable could have been spoken on either side.

He looked back over his shoulder, and beckoned them to enter. Mr. Lorry got his arm securely round the daughter's waist, and held her; for he felt that she was sinking.

"A—a—a—business, business!" he urged, with a moisture that was not of business shining on his cheek.

"Come in, come in!"

"I am afraid of it," she answered, shuddering.

"Of it? What?"

"I mean of him. Of my father."

Rendered in a manner desperate, by her state and by the beckoning of their conductor, he drew over his neck the arm that shook upon his shoulder, lifted her a little, and hurried her into the room. He set her down just within the door, and held her, clinging to him.

Defarge drew out the key, closed the door, locked it on the inside, took out the key again, and held it in his hand. All this he did, methodically, and with as loud and harsh an accompaniment of noise as he could make. Finally, he walked across the room with a measured tread to where the window was. He stopped there, and faced round.

The garret, built to be a depository for firewood and the like, was dim and dark: for, the window of dormer shape, was in truth a door in the roof, with a little crane over it for the hoisting up of stores from the street: unglazed, and closing up the middle in two pieces, like any other door of French construction. To exclude the cold, one half of this door was fast closed, and the other was opened but a very little way. Such a scanty portion of light was admitted through these means, that it was difficult, on first coming in, to see anything; and long habit alone could have slowly formed in any one, the ability to do any work requiring nicety in such obscurity. Yet, work of that kind was being done in the garret; for, with his back towards the door, and his face towards the window where the keeper of the wine-shop stood looking at him, a white-haired man sat on a low bench, stooping forward and very busy, making shoes.

CHAPTER VI.

The Shoemaker.

“GOOD DAY!” said Monsieur Defarge, looking down at the white head that bent low over the shoemaking.

It was raised for a moment, and a very faint voice responded to the salutation, as if it were at a distance

“Good day!”

“You are still hard at work, I see?”

After a long silence, the head was lifted for another moment, and the voice replied, “Yes—I am working.” This time, a pair of haggard eyes had looked at the questioner, before the face had dropped again.

The faintness of the voice was pitiable and dreadful. It was not the faintness of physical weakness, though confinement and hard fare no doubt had their part in it. Its deplorable peculiarity was, that it was the faintness of solitude and disuse. It was like the last feeble echo of a sound made long and long ago. So entirely had it lost the life and resonance of the human voice, that it affected the senses like a once beautiful colour, faded away into a poor weak stain. So sunken and suppressed it was, that it was like a voice underground. So expressive it was, of a hopeless and lost creature, that a famished traveller, wearied out by lonely wandering in a wilderness, would have remembered home and friends in such a tone before lying down to die.

Some minutes of silent work had passed, and the haggard eyes had looked up again: not with any interest or curiosity, but with a dull mechanical perception, beforehand, that the spot where the only visitor they were aware of had stood, was not yet empty.

“I want,” said Defarge, who had not removed his gaze from the shoemaker, “to let in a little more light here. You can bear a little more?”

The shoemaker stopped his work; looked, with a vacant air of listening, at the floor on one side of him; then, similarly, at the floor on the other side of him; then, upward at the speaker.

“What did you say?”

“You can bear a little more light?”

“I must bear it, if you let it in.” (Laying the palest shadow of a stress upon the second word.)

The opened half-door was opened a little further, and secured at that angle for the time. A broad ray of light fell into the garret, and showed the workman, with an unfinished shoe upon his lap, pausing in his labour. His few common tools and various scraps of leather

were at his feet and on his bench. He had a white beard, raggedly cut, but not very long, a hollow face, and exceedingly bright eyes. The hollowness and thinness of his face would have caused them to look large under his yet dark eyebrows and his confused white hair, though they had been really otherwise; but they were naturally large, and looked unnaturally so. His yellow rags of shirt lay open at the throat, and showed his body to be withered and worn. He, and his old canvas frock, and his loose stockings, and all his poor tatters of clothes, had, in a long seclusion from direct light and air, faded down to such a dull uniformity of parchment-yellow, that it would have been hard to say which was which.

He had put up a hand between his eyes and the light, and the very bones of it seemed transparent. So he sat, with a steadfastly vacant gaze, pausing in his work. He never looked at the figure before him, without first looking down on this side of himself, then on that, as if he had left the habit of associating place with sound; he never spoke, without first wandering in his manner, and forgetting to speak.

“Are you going to finish that pair of shoes to-day?” asked Defarge, motioning to Mr. Lorry to come forward.

“What did you say?”

“Do you mean to finish that pair of shoes to-day?”

“I can’t say that I mean to. I suppose so. I don’t know.”

But, the question reminded him of his work, and he bent over it again.

Mr. Lorry came silently forward, leaving the daughter by the door. When he had stood, for a minute or two, by the side of Defarge, the shoemaker looked up. He showed no surprise at seeing another figure, but the unsteady fingers of one of his hands strayed to his lips as he looked at it (his lips and his nails were of the same pale lead-colour), and then the hand dropped to his work, and he once more bent over the shoe. The look and the action had occupied but an instant.

“You have a visitor, you see,” said Monsieur Defarge.

“What did you say?”

“Here is a visitor.”

The shoemaker looked up as before, but without removing a hand from his work.

“Come!” said Defarge. “Here is monsieur, who knows a well-made shoe when he sees one. Show him that shoe you are looking at. Take it monsieur.”

Mr. Lorry took it in his hand.

“Tell monsieur what kind of shoe it is, and the maker’s name.”

There was a longer pause than usual, before the shoemaker replied.

“I forget what it was you asked me. What did you say?”

“I said, couldn't you describe the kind of shoe, for monsieur's information?”

“It is a lady's shoe. It is a young lady's walking-shoe. It is in the present mode. I never saw the mode. I have had a pattern in my hand.” He glanced at the shoe, with some little passing touch of pride.

“And the maker's name?” said Defarge.

Now that he had no work to hold, he laid the knuckles of the right hand in the hollow of the left, and then the knuckles of the left hand in the hollow of the right, and then passed a hand across his bearded chin, and so on in regular changes, without a moment's intermission. The task of recalling him from the vacancy into which he always sank when he had spoken, was like recalling some very weak person from a swoon, or endeavouring, in the hope of some disclosure, to stay the spirit of a fast-dying man.

“Did you ask me for my name?”

“Assuredly I did.”

“One Hundred and Five, North Tower.”

“Is that all?”

“One Hundred and Five, North Tower.”

With a weary sound that was not a sigh, nor a groan, he bent to work again, until the silence was again broken.

“You are not a shoemaker by trade?” said Mr. Lorry, looking steadfastly at him.

His haggard eyes turned to Defarge as if he would have transferred the question to him; but as no help came from that quarter, they turned back on the questioner when they had sought the ground.

“I am not a shoemaker by trade? No, I was not a shoemaker by trade. I—I learnt it here. I taught myself. I asked leave to—”

He lapsed away, even for minutes, ringing those measured changes on his hands the whole time. His eyes came slowly back, at last, to the face from which they had wandered; when they rested on it, he started, and resumed, in the manner of a sleeper that moment awake, reverting to a subject of last night.

“I asked leave to teach myself, and I got it with much difficulty after a long while, and I have made shoes ever since.”

As he held out his hand for the shoe that had been taken from him, Mr. Lorry said, still looking steadfastly in his face:

“Monsieur Manette, do you remember nothing of me?”

The shoe dropped to the ground, and he sat looking fixedly at the questioner.

“Monsieur Manette ;” Mr. Lorry laid his hand upon Defarge’s arm ; “do you remember nothing of this man? Look at him. Look at me. Is there no old banker, no old business, no old servant, no old time, rising in your mind, Monsieur Manette?”

As the captive of many years sat looking fixedly, by turns at Mr. Lorry and at Defarge, some long obliterated marks of an actively intent intelligence in the middle of the forehead, gradually forced themselves through the black mist that had fallen on him. They were overclouded again, they were fainter, they were gone ; but, they had been there. And so exactly was the expression repeated on the fair young face of her who had crept along the wall to a point where she could see him, and where she now stood looking at him, with hands which at first had been only raised in frightened compassion, if not even to keep him off and shut out the sight of him, but which were now extending towards him, trembling with eagerness to lay the spectral face upon her warm young breast, and love it back to life and hope—so exactly was the expression repeated (though in stronger characters) on her fair young face, that it looked as though it had passed, like a moving light, from him to her.

Darkness had fallen on him in its place. He looked at the two, less and less attentively, and his eyes in gloomy abstraction sought the ground and looked about him in the old way. Finally, with a deep long sigh, he took the shoe up and resumed his work.

“Have you recognised him, monsieur?” asked Defarge in a whisper.

“Yes ; for a moment. At first I thought it quite hopeless, but I have unquestionably seen, for a single moment, the face that I once knew well. Hush ! Let us draw further back. Hush !”

She had moved from the wall of the garret, very near to the bench on which he sat. There was something awful in his unconsciousness of the figure that could have put out its hand and touched him as he stooped over his labour.

Not a word was spoken, not a sound was made. She stood, like a spirit, beside him, and he bent over his work.

It happened, at length, that he had occasion to change the instrument in his hand, for his shoemaker’s knife. It lay on that side of him which was not the side on which she stood. He had taken it up, and was stooping to work again, when his eyes caught the skirt of her dress. He raised them, and saw her face. The two spectators

started forward, but she stayed them with a motion of her hand. She had no fear of his striking at her with the knife, though they had.

He stared at her with a fearful look, and after a while his lips began to form some words, though no sound proceeded from them. By degrees, in the pauses of his quick and laboured breathing, he was heard to say :

“What is this !”

With the tears streaming down her face, she put her two hands to her lips, and kissed them to him ; then clasped them on her breast, as if she laid his ruined head there.

“You are not the gaoler’s daughter ?”

She sighed “No.”

“Who are you ?”

Not yet trusting the tones of her voice, she sat down on the bench beside him. He recoiled, but she laid her hand upon his arm. A strange thrill struck him when she did so, and visibly passed over his frame ; he laid the knife down softly, as he sat staring at her.

Her golden hair, which she wore in long curls, had been hurriedly pushed aside, and fell down over her neck. Advancing his hand by little and little, he took it up, and looked at it. In the midst of the action he went astray, and, with another deep sigh, fell to work at his shoemaking.

But, not for long. Releasing his arm, she laid her hand upon his shoulder. After looking doubtfully at it, two or three times, as if to be sure that it was really there, he laid down his work, put his hand to his neck, and took off a blackened string with a scrap of folded rag attached to it. He opened this, carefully, on his knee, and it contained a very little quantity of hair : not more than one or two long golden hairs, which he had, in some old day, wound off upon his finger.

He took her hair into his hand again, and looked closely at it. “It is the same. How can it be ! When was it ! How was it !”

As the concentrating expression returned to his forehead, he seemed to become conscious that it was in hers too. He turned her full to the light, and looked at her.

“She had laid her head upon my shoulder, that night when I was summoned out—she had a fear of my going, though I had none—and when I was brought to the North Tower they found these upon my sleeve. ‘You will leave me them ? They can never help me to escape in the body, though they may in the spirit.’ Those were the words I said. I remember them very well.”

He formed this speech with his lips many times before he could utter it. But when he did find spoken words for it, they came to him coherently, though slowly.



“WHAT IS THIS?”

—A Tale of Two Cities, Vol. Eleven, page 42.

“How was this?—*Was it you?*”

Once more, the two spectators started, as he turned upon her with a frightful suddenness. But she sat perfectly still in his grasp, and only said, in a low voice, “I entreat you, good gentlemen, do not come near us, do not speak, do not move!”

“Hark!” he exclaimed. “Whose voice was that?”

His hands released her as he uttered this cry, and went up to his white hair, which they tore in a frenzy. It died out, as everything but his shoemaking did die out of him, and he refolded his little packet and tried to secure it in his breast; but, he still looked at her, and gloomily shook his head.

“No, no, no; you are too young, too blooming. It can't be. See what the prisoner is. These are not the hands she knew, this is not the face she knew, this is not a voice she ever heard. No, no. She was—and He was before the slow years of the North Tower—ages ago. What is your name, my gentle angel?”

Hailing his softened tone and manner, his daughter fell upon her knees before him, with her appealing hands upon his breast.

“O, sir, at another time you shall know my name, and who my mother was, and who my father, and how I never knew their hard, hard history. But I cannot tell you at this time, and I cannot tell you here. All that I may tell you, here and now, is, that I pray to you to touch me and to bless me. Kiss me, kiss me! O my dear, my dear!”

His cold white head mingled with her radiant hair, which warmed and lighted it as though it were the light of Freedom shining on him.

“If you hear in my voice—I don't know that it is so, but I hope it is—if you hear in my voice any resemblance to a voice that once was sweet music in your ears, weep for it, weep for it! If you touch, in touching my hair, anything that recalls a beloved head that lay in your breast when you were young and free, weep for it, weep for it! If, when I hint to you of a Home there is before us, where I will be true to you with all my duty and with all my faithful service, I bring back the remembrance of a Home long desolate, while your poor heart pined away, weep for it, weep for it!”

She held him closer round the neck, and rocked him on her breast like a child.

“If, when I tell you, dearest dear, that your agony is over, and that I have come here to take you from it, and that we go to England to be at peace and at rest, I cause you to think of your useful life laid waste, and of our native France so wicked to you, weep for it, weep for it! And if, when I shall tell you of my name, and of my fa-

ther who is living, and of my mother who is dead, you learn that I have to kneel to my honoured father, and implore his pardon for having never for his sake striven all day and lain awake and wept all night, because the love of my poor mother hid his torture from me, weep for it, weep for it! Weep for her, then, and for me! Good gentlemen, thank God! I feel his sacred tears upon my face, and his sobs strike against my heart. O, see! Thank God for us, thank God!"

He had sunk in her arms, with his face dropped on her breast: a sight so touching, yet so terrible in the tremendous wrong and suffering which had gone before it, that the two beholders covered their faces.

When the quiet of the garret had been long undisturbed, and his heaving breast and shaken form had long yielded to the calm that must follow all storms—emblem to humanity, of the rest and silence into which the storm called Life must hush at last—they came forward to raise the father and daughter from the ground. He had gradually drooped to the floor, and lay there in a lethargy, worn out. She had nestled down with him, that his head might lie upon her arm; and her hair drooping over him curtained him from the light.

"If, without disturbing him," she said, raising her hand to Mr. Lorry as he stooped over them, after repeated blowings of his nose, "all could be arranged for our leaving Paris at once, so that, from the very door, he could be taken away—"

"But, consider. Is he fit for the journey?" asked Mr. Lorry.

"More fit for that, I think, than to remain in this city, so dreadful to him."

"It is true," said Defarge, who was kneeling to look on and hear. "More than that: Monsieur Manette is, for all reasons, best out of France. Say, shall I hire a carriage and post-horses?"

"That's business," said Mr. Lorry, resuming on the shortest notice his methodical manners; "and if business is to be done, I had better do it."

"Then be so kind," urged Miss Manette, "as to leave us here. You see how composed he has become, and you cannot be afraid to leave him with me now. Why should you be? If you will lock the door to secure us from interruption, I do not doubt that you will find him, when you come back, as quiet as you leave him. In any case, I will take care of him until you return, and then we will remove him straight."

Both Mr. Lorry and Defarge were rather disinclined to this course, and in favour of one of them remaining. But, as there were not only carriage and horses to be seen to, but travelling papers; and as time pressed, for

the day was drawing to an end, it came at last to their hastily dividing the business that was necessary to be done, and hurrying away to do it.

Then, as the darkness closed in, the daughter laid her head down on the hard ground close at the father's side, and watched him. The darkness deepened and deepened, and they both lay quiet, until a light gleamed through the chinks in the wall.

Mr. Lorry and Monsieur Defarge had made all ready for the journey, and had brought with them, besides travelling cloaks and wrappers, bread and meat, wine, and hot coffee. Monsieur Defarge put this provender, and the lamp he carried, on the shoemaker's bench (there was nothing else in the garret but a pallet bed), and he and Mr. Lorry roused the captive, and assisted him to his feet.

No human intelligence could have read the mysteries of his mind, in the scared blank wonder of his face. Whether he knew what had happened, whether he recollected what they had said to him, whether he knew that he was free, were questions which no sagacity could have solved. They tried speaking to him; but, he was so confused, and so very slow to answer, that they took fright at his bewilderment, and agreed for the time to tamper with him no more. He had a wild, lost manner of occasionally clasping his head in his hands, that had not been seen in him before; yet he had some pleasure in the mere sound of his daughter's voice, and invariably turned to it when she spoke.

In the submissive way of one long accustomed to obey under coercion, he ate and drank what they gave him to eat and drink, and put on the cloak and other wrappings that they gave him to wear. He readily responded to his daughter's drawing her arm through his, and took—and kept—her hand in both of his own.

They began to descend; Monsieur Defarge going first with the lamp, Mr. Lorry closing the little procession. They had not traversed many steps of the long main staircase when he stopped, and stared at the roof and round at the walls.

“You remember the place, my father? You remember coming up here?”

“What did you say?”

But, before she could repeat the question, he murmured an answer as if she had repeated it.

“Remember? No, I don't remember. It was so very long ago.”

That he had no recollection whatever of his having been brought from his prison to that house, was apparent to them. They heard him mutter, “One Hundred and Five, North Tower;” and when he looked about

him, it evidently was for the strong fortress-walls which had long encompassed him. On their reaching the court-yard, he instinctively altered his tread, as being in expectation of a drawbridge; and when there was no drawbridge, and he saw the carriage waiting in the open street, he dropped his daughter's hand and clasped his head again.

No crowd was about the door; no people were discernible at any of the many windows; not even a chance passer-by was in the street. An unnatural silence and desertion reigned there. Only one soul was to be seen, and that was Madame Defarge—who leaned against the door-post, knitting, and saw nothing.

The prisoner had got into the coach, and his daughter had followed him, when Mr. Lorry's feet were arrested on the step by his asking, miserably, for his shoemaking tools and the unfinished shoes. Madame Defarge immediately called to her husband that she would get them, and went, knitting, out of the lamplight, through the court-yard. She quickly brought them down and handed them in;—and immediately afterwards leaned against the door-post, knitting, and saw nothing.

Defarge got upon the box, and gave the word "To the Barrier!" The postilion cracked his whip, and they clattered away under the feeble over-swinging lamps.

Under the over-swinging lamps—swinging ever brighter in the better streets, and ever dimmer in the worse—and by lighted shops, gay crowds, illuminated coffee-houses, and theatre doors, to one of the city gates. Soldiers with lanterns, at the guard-house there. "Your papers, travellers!" "See here then, Monsieur the Officer," said Defarge, getting down and taking him gravely apart, "these are the papers of monsieur inside, with the white head. They were consigned to me, with him at the —" He dropped his voice, there was a flutter among the military lanterns, and one of them being handed into the coach by an arm in uniform, the eyes connected with the arm looked, not an every day or an every night look, at monsieur with the white head. "It is well. Forward!" from the uniform. "Adieu!" from Defarge. And so, under a short grove of feebler and feebler over-swinging lamps, out under the great grove of stars.

Beneath that arch of unmoved and eternal lights: some, so remote from this little earth that the learned tell us it is doubtful whether their rays have even yet discovered it, as a point in space where anything is suffered or done: the shadows of the night were broad and black. All through the cold and restless interval, until dawn, they once more whispered in the ears of Mr.

Jarvis Lorry—sitting opposite the buried man who had been dug out, and wondering what subtle powers were forever lost to him, and what were capable of restoration—the old inquiry :

“I hope you care to be recalled to life?”

And the old answer :

“I can't say.”

BOOK THE SECOND.—THE

GOLDEN THREAD.

CHAPTER I.

Five Years Later.

TELLSON'S Bank by Temple Bar was an old-fashioned place, even in the year one thousand seven hundred and eighty. It was very small, very dark, very ugly, very incommensurable. It was an old-fashioned place, moreover, in the moral attribute that the partners in the House were proud of its smallness, proud of its darkness, proud of its ugliness, proud of its incommensurability. They were even boastful of its eminence in those particulars, and were fired by an express conviction that, if it were less objectionable, it would be less respectable. This was no passive belief, but an active weapon which they flashed at more convenient places of business. Tellson's (they said) wanted no elbow-room, Tellson's wanted no light. Tellson's wanted no embellishment. Noakes and Co.'s might, or Snooks Brothers' might; but Tellson's, thank Heaven!—

Any of these partners would have disinherited his son on the question of rebuilding Tellson's. In this respect the House was much on a par with the Country; which did very often disinherit its sons for suggesting improvements in laws and customs that had long been highly objectionable, but were only the more respectable.

Thus it had come to pass, that Tellson's was the triumphant perfection of inconvenience. After bursting open a door of idiotic obstinacy with a weak rattle in its throat, you fell into Tellson's down two steps, and came to your senses in a miserable little shop, with two little

counters, where the oldest of men made your cheque shake as if the wind rustled it, while they examined the signature by the dingiest of windows, which were always under a shower-bath of mud from Fleet-street, and which were made the dingier by their own iron bars proper, and the heavy shadow of Temple Bar. If your business necessitated your seeing "the House," you were put into a species of Condemned Hole at the back, where you meditated on a misspent life, until the House came with its hands in its pockets, and you could hardly blink at it in the dismal twilight. Your money came out of, or went into, wormy old wooden drawers, particles of which flew up your nose and down your throat when they were opened and shut. Your bank-notes had a musty odour, as if they were fast decomposing into rags again. Your plate was stowed away among the neighbouring cesspools, and evil communications corrupted its good polish in a day or two. Your deeds got into extemporised strong-rooms made of kitchens and sculleries, and fretted all the fat out of their parchments into the banking-house air. Your lighter boxes of family papers went up-stairs into a Barmecide room, that always had a great dining-table in it and never had a dinner, and where, even in the year one thousand seven hundred and eighty, the first letters written to you by your old love, or by your little children, were but newly released from the horror of being ogled through the windows, by the heads exposed on Temple Bar with an insensate brutality and ferocity worthy of Abyssinia or Ashantee.

But indeed, at that time, putting to death was a recipe much in vogue with all trades and professions, and not least of all with Tellson's. Death is Nature's remedy for all things, and why not Legislation's? Accordingly, the forger was put to Death; the utterer of a bad note was put to Death; the unlawful opener of a letter was put to Death; the purloiner of forty shillings and sixpence was put to Death; the holder of a horse at Tellson's door who made off with it, was put to Death; the coiner of a bad shilling was put to Death; the sounders of three-fourths of the notes in the whole gamut of Crime, were put to Death. Not that it did the least good in the way of prevention—it might almost have been worth remarking that the fact was exactly the reverse—but, it cleared off (as to this world) the trouble of each particular case, and left nothing else connected with it to be looked after. Thus, Tellson's, in its day, like greater places of business, its contemporaries, had taken so many lives, that, if the heads laid low before it had been ranged on Temple Bar instead of being privately disposed of, they would probably have excluded what little light the ground floor had, in a rather significant manner.

Cramped in all kinds of dim cupboards and hutches at Tellson's, the oldest of men carried on the business gravely. When they took a young man into Tellson's London house, they hid him somewhere till he was old. They kept him in a dark place, like a cheese, until he had the full Tellson flavour and blue-mould upon him. Then only was he permitted to be seen, spectacularly poring over large books, and casting his breeches and gaiters into the general weight of the establishment.

Outside Tellson's—never by any means in it, unless called in—was an odd-job-man, an occasional porter and messenger, who served as the live sign of the house. He was never absent during business hours, unless upon an errand, and then he was represented by his son; a grisly urchin of twelve, who was his express image. People understood that Tellson's, in a stately way, tolerated the odd-job-man. The House had always tolerated some person in that capacity, and time and tide had drifted this person to the post. His surname was Cruncher, and on the youthful occasion of his renouncing by proxy the works of darkness, in the easterly parish church of Houndsditch, he had received the added appellation of Jerry.

The scene, was Mr. Cruncher's private lodging in Hanging-sword-alley, Whitefriars; the time, half-past seven of the clock on a windy March morning, Anno Domini seventeen hundred and eighty. (Mr. Cruncher himself always spoke of the year of our Lord as Anna Dominoes: apparently under the impression that the Christian era dated from the invention of a popular game, by a lady who had bestowed her name upon it.)

Mr. Cruncher's apartments were not in a savoury neighbourhood, and were but two in number, even if a closet with a single pane of glass in it might be counted as one. But, they were very decently kept. Early as it was, on the windy March morning, the room in which he lay abed was already scrubbed throughout; and between the cups and saucers arranged for breakfast, and the lumbering deal table, a very clean white cloth was spread.

Mr. Cruncher reposed under a patchwork counterpane, like a Harlequin at home. At first, he slept heavily, but, by degrees, began to roll and surge in bed, until he rose above the surface, with his spiky hair looking as if it must tear the sheets to ribbons. At which juncture, he exclaimed, in a voice of dire exasperation:

“Bust me, if she ain't at it agin!”

A woman, of orderly and industrious appearance rose from her knees in a corner, with sufficient haste and trepidation to show that she was the person referred to.

“What!” said Mr. Cruncher, looking out of bed for a boot. “You’re at it agin, are you?”

After hailing the morn with this second salutation, he threw a boot at the woman as a third. It was a very muddy boot, and may introduce the odd circumstance connected with Mr. Cruncher’s domestic economy, that, whereas he often came home after banking hours with clean boots, he often got up next morning to find the same boots covered with clay.

“What,” said Mr. Cruncher, varying his apostrophe after missing his mark—“what are you up to, Aggerawayter?”

“I was only saying my prayers.”

“Saying your prayers. You’re a nice woman! What do you mean by flopping yourself down and praying agin me?”

“I was not praying against you; I was praying for you.”

“You weren’t. And if you were, I won’t be took the liberty with. Here! your mother’s a nice woman, young Jerry, going a praying agin your father’s prosperity. You’ve got a dutiful mother, you have, my son. You’ve got a religious mother, you have, my boy: going and flopping herself down, and praying that the bread-and-butter may be snatched out of the mouth of her only child!”

Master Cruncher (who was in his shirt) took this very ill, and, turning to his mother, strongly deprecated any praying away of his personal board.

“And what do you suppose, you conceited female,” said Mr. Cruncher, with unconscious inconsistency, “that the worth of *your* prayers may be? Name the price that you put *your* prayers at?”

“They only come from the heart, Jerry. They are worth no more than that.”

“Worth no more than that,” repeated Mr. Cruncher. “They ain’t worth much, then. Whether or no, I won’t be prayed agin, I tell you. I can’t afford it. I’m not a going to be made unlucky by *your* sneaking. If you must go flopping yourself down, flop in favour of your husband and child, and not in opposition to ’em. If I had had any but a unnat’ral wife, and this poor boy had had any but a unnat’ral mother, I might have made some money last week, instead of being counterprayed and countermined and religiously circumvented into the worst of luck. Bu-u-ust me!” said Mr. Cruncher, who all this time had been putting on his clothes, “if I ain’t, what with piety and one blowed thing and another, been choused this last week into as bad luck as ever a poor devil of a honest tradesman met with! Young Jerry,

dress yourself, my boy, and while I clean my boots keep a eye upon your mother now and then, and if you see any signs of more flopping, give me a call. For, I tell you," here he addressed his wife once more, "I won't be gone agin, in this manner. I am as rickety as a hackney coach, I'm as sleepy as laudanum, my lines is strained to that degree that I shouldn't know, if it wasn't for the pain in 'em, which was me and which somebody else, yet I'm none the better for it in pocket; and it's my suspicion that you've been at it from morning to night to prevent me from being the better for it in pocket, and I won't put up with it, Aggerawayter, and what do you say now!"

Growling, in addition, such phrases as "Ah! yes! You're religious, too. You wouldn't put yourself in opposition to the interests of your husband and child, would you? Not you!" and throwing off other sarcastic sparks from the whirling grindstone of his indignation, Mr. Cruncher betook himself to his boot-cleaning and his general preparations for business. In the meantime, his son, whose head was garnished with tenderer spikes, and whose young eyes stood close by one another, as his father's did, kept the required watch upon his mother. He greatly disturbed that poor woman at intervals, by darting out of his sleeping closet, where he made his toilet, with a suppressed cry of "You are going to flop, mother.—Halloa, father!" and, after raising this fictitious alarm, darting in again with an undutiful grin.

Mr. Cruncher's temper was not at all improved when he came to his breakfast. He resented Mrs. Cruncher's saying Grace with particular animosity.

"Now, Aggerawayter! What are you up to? At it agin?"

His wife explained that she had merely "asked a blessing."

"Don't do it!" said Mr. Cruncher, looking about, as if he rather expected to see the loaf disappear under the efficacy of his wife's petitions. "I ain't a going to be blest out of house and home. I won't have my wittles blest off my table. Keep still!"

Exceedingly red-eyed and grim, as if he had been up all night at a party which had taken anything but a convivial turn, Jerry Cruncher worried his breakfast rather than ate it, growling over it like any four-footed inmate of a menagerie. Towards nine o'clock he smoothed his ruffled aspect, and, presenting as respectable and business-like an exterior as he could overlay his natural self with, issued forth to the occupation of the day.

It could scarcely be called a trade, in spite of his favourite description of himself as "a honest tradesman."

His stock consisted of a wooden stool, made out of a broken-backed chair cut down, which stool young Jerry, walking at his father's side, carried every morning to beneath the banking-house window that was nearest Temple Bar: where, with the addition of the first handful of straw that could be gleaned from any passing vehicle to keep the cold and wet from the odd job-man's feet, it formed the encampment for the day. On this post of his, Mr. Cruncher was as well known to Fleet-street and the Temple, as the Bar itself—and was almost as ill-looking.

Encamped at a quarter before nine, in good time to touch his three-cornered hat to the oldest of men as they passed in to Tellson's, Jerry took up his station on this windy March morning, with Young Jerry standing by him, when not engaged in making forays through the Bar, to inflict bodily and mental injuries of an acute description on passing boys who were small enough for his amiable purpose. Father and son, extremely like each other, looking silently on at the morning traffic in Fleet-street, with their two heads as near to one another as the two eyes of each were, bore a considerable resemblance to a pair of monkeys. The resemblance was not lessened by the accidental circumstance, that the mature Jerry bit and spat out straw, while the twinkling eyes of the youthful Jerry were as restlessly watchful of him as of everything else in Fleet-street.

The head of one of the regular in-door messengers attached to Tellson's establishment was put through the door, and the word was given:

“Porter wanted!”

“Hooray, father! Here's an early job to begin with!”

Having thus given his parent God speed, Young Jerry seated himself on the stool, entered on his reversionary interest in the straw his father had been chewing, and cogitated.

“Al-ways rusty! His fingers is al-ways rusty!” muttered Young Jerry. “Where does my father get all that iron rust from? He don't get no iron rust here!”

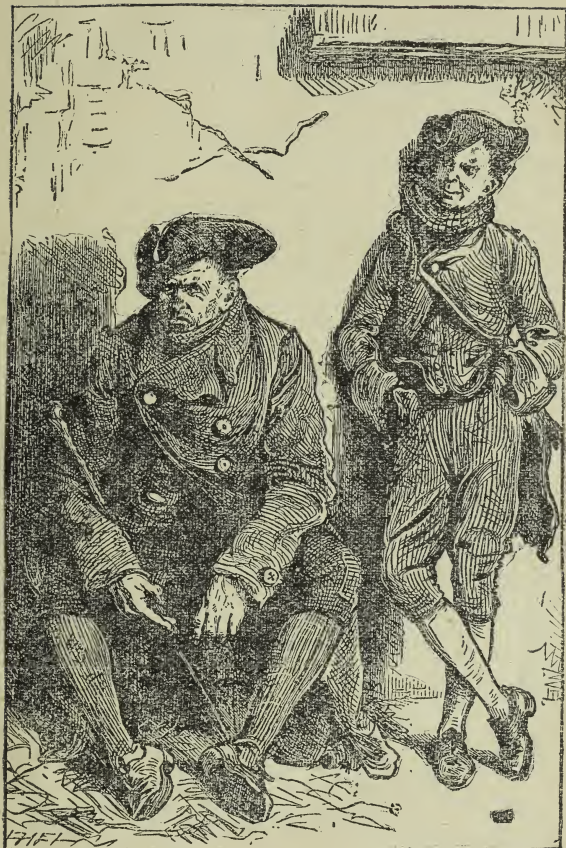
CHAPTER II.

A Sight.

“You know the Old Bailey well, no doubt?” said one of the oldest of clerks to Jerry the messenger.

“Ye-es, sir,” returned Jerry, in something of a dogged manner. “I *do* know the Bailey.”

“Just so. And you know Mr. Lorry?”



MESSRS. CRUNCHER AND SON.

—A Tale of Two Cities, Vol. Eleven, page 53.

"I know Mr. Lorry, sir, much better than I know the Bailey. Much better," said Jerry, not unlike a reluctant witness at the establishment in question, "than I, as a honest tradesman, wish to know the Bailey."

"Very well. Find the door where the witnesses go in, and show the doorkeeper this note for Mr. Lorry. He will then let you in."

"Into the court, sir?"

"Into the court."

Mr. Cruncher's eyes seemed to get a little closer to one another, and to interchange the inquiry, "What do you think of this?"

"Am I to wait in the court, sir?" he asked, as the result of that conference.

"I am going to tell you. The doorkeeper will pass the note to Mr. Lorry, and do you make any gesture that will attract Mr. Lorry's attention, and show him where you stand. Then what you have to do, is, to remain there until he wants you."

"Is that all, sir?"

"That's all. He wishes to have a messenger at hand. This is to tell him you are there."

As the ancient clerk deliberately folded and superscribed the note, Mr. Cruncher, after surveying him in silence until he came to the blotting-paper stage, remarked:

"I suppose they'll be trying Forgeries this morning?"

"Treason!"

"That's quartering," said Jerry. "Barbarous!"

"It is the law," remarked the ancient clerk turning his surprised spectacles upon him. "It is the law."

"It's hard in the law to spile a man, I think. It's hard enough to kill him, but it's wery hard to spile him, sir."

"Not at all," returned the ancient clerk. "Speak well of the law. Take care of your chest and voice, my good friend, and leave the law to take care of itself. I give you that advice."

"It's the damp, sir, what settles on my chest and voice," said Jerry. "I leave you to judge what a damp way of earning a living mine is."

"Well, well," said the old clerk: "we all have our various ways of gaining a livelihood. Some of us have damp ways, and some of us have dry ways. Here is the letter. Go along."

Jerry took the letter, and, remarking to himself with less internal deference, than he made an outward show of, "You are a lean old one too," made his bow, informed his son, in passing, of his destination, and went his way.

They hanged at Tyburn, in those days, so the street outside Newgate had not obtained one infamous notoriety

that has since attached to it. But the gaol was a vile place, in which most kinds of debauchery and villany were practised, and where dire diseases were bred, that came into court with the prisoners, and sometimes rushed straight from the dock at my Lord Chief Justice himself, and pulled him off the bench. It had more than once happened, that the judge in the black cap pronounced his own doom as certainly as the prisoner's, and even died before him. For the rest, the Old Bailey was famous as a kind of deadly inn-yard, from which pale travellers set out continually, in carts and coaches, on a violent passage into the other world: traversing some two miles and a half of public street and road, and shaming few good citizens, if any. So powerful is use, and so desirable to be good use in the beginning. It was famous, too, for the pillory, a wise old institution, that inflicted a punishment of which no one could foresee the extent; also, for the whipping-post, another dear old institution, very humanising and softening to behold in action; also, for extensive transactions in blood-money, another fragment of ancestral wisdom, systematically leading to the most frightful mercenary crimes that could be committed under heaven. Altogether, the Old Bailey, at that date, was a choice illustration of the precept, that "Whatever is is right;" an aphorism that would be as final as it is lazy, did it not include the troublesome consequence, that nothing that ever was, was wrong.

Making his way through the tainted crowd, dispersed up and down this hideous scene of action, with the skill of a man accustomed to make his way quietly, the messenger found out the door he sought, and handed in his letter through a trap in it. For, people then paid to see the play at the Old Bailey, just as they paid to see the play in Bedlam—only the former entertainment was much the dearer. Therefore, all the Old Bailey doors were well guarded—except, indeed, the social doors by which the criminals got there, and those were always left wide open.

After some delay and demur, the door grudgingly turned on its hinges a very little way, and allowed Mr. Jerry Cruncher to squeeze himself into court.

"What's on?" he asked in a whipser, of the man he found himself next to.

"Nothing yet."

"What's coming on?"

"The Treason case."

"The quartering one, eh?"

"Ah!" returned the man with a relish; "he'll be drawn on a hurdle to be half hanged, and then he'll be taken down and sliced before his own face, and then his

inside will be taken out and burnt while he looks on, and then his head will be chopped off, and he'll be cut into quarters. That's the sentence."

"If he's found Guilty, you mean to say?" Jerry added, by way of proviso.

"Oh! they'll find him Guilty," said the other. "Don't you be afraid of that."

Mr. Cruncher's attention was here diverted to the doorkeeper, whom he saw making his way to Mr. Lorry, with the note in his hand. Mr. Lorry sat at a table, among the gentlemen in wigs: not far from a wigged gentleman, the prisoner's counsel, who had a great bundle of papers before him: and nearly opposite another wigged gentleman with his hands in his pockets, whose whole attention, when Mr. Cruncher looked at him then or afterwards, seemed to be concentrated on the ceiling of the court. After some gruff coughing and rubbing of his chin and signing with his hand, Jerry attracted the notice of Mr. Lorry, who had stood up to look for him, and who quietly nodded, and sat down again.

"What's *he* got to do with the case?" asked the man he had spoken with.

"Blest if I know," said Jerry.

"What have *you* got to do with it, then, if a person may inquire?"

"Blest if I know that either," said Jerry.

The entrance of the Judge, and a consequent great stir and settling-down in the court, stopped the dialogue. Presently, the dock became the central point of interest. Two gaolers, who had been standing there, went out, and the prisoner was brought in, and put to the bar.

Everybody present, except the one wigged gentleman who looked at the ceiling, stared at him. All the human breath in the place, rolled at him, like a sea, or a wind, or a fire. Eager faces strained round pillars and corners, to get a sight of him; spectators in back rows stood up, not to miss a hair of him; people on the floor of the court, laid their hands on the shoulders of the people before them, to help themselves, at anybody's cost, to a view of him—stood a-tiptoe, got upon ledges, stood upon next to nothing, to see every inch of him. Conspicuous among these latter, like an animated bit of the spiked wall of Newgate, Jerry stood; aiming at the prisoner the beery breath of a whet he had taken as he came along, and discharging it to mingle with the waves of other beer, and gin, and tea, and coffee, and what not, that flowed at him, and already broke upon the great windows behind him in an impure mist and rain.

The object of all this staring and blaring, was a young man of about five-and-twenty, well-grown and well-looking, with a sunburnt cheek and a dark eye. His condi-

tion was that of a young gentleman. He was plainly dressed in black, or very dark grey, and his hair, which was long and dark, was gathered in a ribbon at the back of his neck : more to be out of his way than for ornament. As an emotion of the mind will express itself through any covering of the body, so the paleness which his situation engendered came through the brown on his cheek, showing the soul to be stronger than the sun. He was otherwise quite self-possessed, bowed to the Judge, and stood quiet.

The sort of interest with which this man was stared and breathed at, was not a sort that elevated humanity. Had he stood in peril of a less horrible sentence—had there been a chance of any one of its savage details being spared—by just so much would he have lost in his fascination. The form that was to be doomed to be so shamefully mangled, was the sight ; the immortal creature that was to be so butchered and torn asunder, yielded the sensation. Whatever gloss the various spectators put upon the interest, according to their several arts and powers of self-deceit, the interest was, at the root of it, Ogreish.

Silence in the court ! Charles Darnay had yesterday pleaded Not Guilty to an indictment denouncing him (with infinite jingle and jangle) for that he was a false traitor to our serene, illustrious, excellent, and so forth, prince, our Lord the King, by reason of his having, on divers occasions, and by divers means and ways, assisted Lewis, the French King, in his wars against our said serene, illustrious, excellent, and so forth ; that was to say, by coming and going between the dominions of our said serene, illustrious, excellent, and so forth, and those of the said French Lewis, and wickedly, falsely, traitorously, and otherwise evil-adverbiously, revealing to the said French Lewis what forces our said serene, illustrious, excellent, and so forth, had in preparation to send to Canada and North America. This much, Jerry, with his head becoming more and more spiky as the law terms bristled it, made out with huge satisfaction, and so arrived circuitously at the understanding that the aforesaid, and over and over again aforesaid, Charles Darnay, stood there before him upon his trial ; that the jury were swearing in ; and that Mr. Attorney-General was making ready to speak.

The accused, who was (and who knew he was) being mentally hanged, beheaded, and quartered, by everybody there, neither flinched from the situation, nor assumed any theatrical air in it. He was quiet and attentive ; watched the opening proceedings with a grave interest ; and stood with his hands resting on the slab of wood before him, so composedly, that they had not displaced a

leaf of the herbs with which it was strewn. The court was all bestrewn with herbs and sprinkled with vinegar, as a precaution against gaol air and gaol fever.

Over the prisoner's head, there was a mirror, to throw the light down upon him. Crowds of the wicked and the wretched had been reflected in it, and had passed from its surface and this earth's together. Haunted in a most ghastly manner that abominable place would have been, if the glass could ever have rendered back its reflexions, as the ocean is one day to give up its dead. Some passing thought of the infamy and disgrace for which it had been reserved, may have struck the prisoner's mind. Be that as it may, a change in his position making him conscious of a bar of light across his face, he looked up; and when he saw the glass his face flushed, and his right hand pushed the herbs away.

It happened that the action turned his face to that side of the court which was on his left. About on a level with his eyes, there sat in that corner of the Judge's bench, two persons upon whom his look immediately rested; so immediately, and so much to the changing of his aspect, that all the eyes that were turned upon him, turned to them.

The spectators saw in the two figures, a young lady little more than twenty, and a gentleman who is evidently her father; a man of a very remarkable appearance in respect of the absolute whiteness of his hair, and a certain indescribable intensity of face: not of an active kind, but pondering and self-communing. When this expression was upon him, he looked as if he were old; but, when it was stirred and broken up—as it was now, in a moment, on his speaking to his daughter—he became a handsome man, not past the prime of life.

His daughter had one of her hands drawn through his arm, as she sat by him, and the other pressed upon it. She had drawn close to him, in her dread of the scene, and in her pity for the prisoner. Her forehead had been strikingly expressive of an engrossing terror and compassion that saw nothing but the peril of the accused. This had been so very noticeable, so very powerfully and naturally shown, that starers who had had no pity for him were touched by her; and the whisper went about, "Who are they?"

Jerry the messenger, who had made his own observations in his own manner, and who had been sucking the rust off his fingers, in his absorption, stretched his neck to hear who they were. The crowd about him had pressed and passed the inquiry on to the nearest attendant, and from him it had been more slowly pressed and passed back; at last it got to Jerry:

"Witnesses."

“ For which side ? ”

“ Against.”

“ Against what side ? ”

“ The prisoner’s.”

The Judge, whose eyes had gone in the general direction, recalled them, leaned back in his seat, and looked steadily at the man whose life was in his hand, as Mr. Attorney-General rose to spin the rope, grind the axe, and hammer the nails into the scaffold.

CHAPTER III.

A Disappointment.

MR. ATTORNEY GENERAL had to inform the jury, that the prisoner before them, though young in years, was old in the treasonable practices which claimed the forfeit of his life. That this correspondence with the public enemy was not a correspondence of to-day, or of yesterday, or even of last year, or of the year before. That, it was certain the prisoner had, for longer than that, been in the habit of passing and repassing between France and England, on secret business of which he could give no honest account. That, if it were in the nature of traitorous ways to thrive (which happily it never was), the real wickedness and guilt of his business might have remained undiscovered. That Providence, however, had put it into the heart of a person who was beyond fear and beyond reproach, to ferret out the nature of the prisoner’s schemes, and, struck with horror, to disclose them to his Majesty’s Chief Secretary of State and most honourable Privy Council. That, this patriot would be produced before them. That, his position and attitude were, on the whole, sublime. That, he had been the prisoner’s friend, but, at once in an auspicious and an evil hour detecting his infamy, had resolved to immolate the traitor he could no longer cherish in his bosom, on the sacred altar of his country. That, if statues were decreed in Britain, as in ancient Greece and Rome, to public benefactors, this shining citizen would assuredly have had one. That, as they were not so decreed, he probably would not have one. That, Virtue, as had been observed by the poets (in many passages which he well knew the jury would have, word for word, at the tips of their tongues ; whereat the jury’s countenances displayed a guilty consciousness that they knew nothing about the passages), was in a manner contagious ; more especially the bright virtue known as patriotism, or love of country. That, the lofty example of this immaculate and unimpeachable witness for the Crown, to refer to whom however unworthily was an honour, had communicated itself to the

prisoner's servant, and had engendered in him a holy determination to examine his master's table-drawers and pockets, and secrete his papers. That, he (Mr. Attorney-General) was prepared to hear some disparagement attempted of this admirable servant ; but that, in a general way, he preferred him to his (Mr. Attorney-General's) brothers and sisters, and honoured him more than his (Mr. Attorney-General's) father and mother. That, he called with confidence on the jury to come and do likewise. That, the evidence of these two witnesses, coupled with the documents of their discovering that would be produced, would show the prisoner to have been furnished with lists of his Majesty's forces, and of their disposition and preparation, both by sea and land, and would leave no doubt that he had habitually conveyed such information to a hostile power. That, these lists could not be proved to be in the prisoner's handwriting ; but that it was all the same ; that, indeed, it was rather the better for the prosecution, as showing the prisoner to be artful in his precautions. That, the proof would go back five years, and would show the prisoner already engaged in these pernicious missions, within a few weeks before the date of the very first action fought between the British troops and the Americans. That, for these reasons the jury, being a loyal jury (as he knew they were), and being a responsible jury (as *they* knew they were), must positively find the prisoner Guilty, and make an end of him, whether they liked it or not. That, they never could lay their heads upon their pillows ; that, they could never tolerate the idea of their wives laying their heads upon their pillows ; that, they never could endure the notion of their children laying their heads upon their pillows ; in short, that there never more could be, for them or theirs, any laying of heads upon pillows at all, unless the prisoner's head was taken off. That head Mr. Attorney-General concluded by demanding of them, in the name of everything he could think of with a round turn in it, and on the faith of his solemn asseveration that he already considered the prisoner as good as dead and gone.

When the Attorney-General ceased, a buzz arose in the court as if a cloud of great blue-flies were swarming about the prisoner, in an anticipation of what he was soon to become. When it toned down again, the unimpeachable patriot appeared in the witness-box.

Mr. Solicitor-General then, following his leader's lead, examined the patriot : John Barsad, gentleman by name. The story of his pure soul was exactly what Mr. Attorney-General had described it to be—perhaps, if it had fault, a little too exactly. Having released his noble bosom of its burden, he would have modestly withdraw

himself, but that the wiggged gentleman with the papers before him, sitting not far from Mr. Lorry, begged to ask him a few questions. The wiggged gentleman sitting opposite, still looking at the ceiling of the court.

Had he ever been a spy himself? No, he scorned the base insinuation. What did he live upon? His property. Where was his property? He didn't precisely remember where it was. What was it? No business of anybody's. Had he inherited it? Yes, he had. From whom? Distant relation. Very distant? Rather. Ever been in prison? Certainly not. Never in a debtor's prison? Didn't see what that had to do with it. Never in a debtor's prison?—Come, once again. Never? Yes. How many times? Two or three times. Not five or six? Perhaps. Of what profession? Gentleman. Ever been kicked? Might have been. Frequently? No. Ever kicked down-stairs? Decidedly not; once received a kick on the top of a staircase, and fell down of his own accord. Kicked on that occasion for cheating at dice? Something to that effect was said by the intoxicated liar who committed the assault, but it was not true. Swear it was not true? Positively. Ever live by cheating at play? Never. Ever live by play? Not more than other gentlemen. Ever borrow money of the prisoner? Yes. Ever pay him? No. Was not this intimacy with the prisoner, in reality a very slight one, forced upon the prisoner in coaches, inns, and packets? No. Sure he saw the prisoner with these lists? Certain. Knew no more about the lists? No. Had not procured them himself, for instance? No. Expect to get anything by this evidence? No. Not in regular government pay and employment, to lay traps? Oh dear no. Or to do anything? Oh dear no. Swear that? Over and over again. No motives but motives of sheer patriotism? None whatever.

The virtuous servant, Roger Cly, swore his way through the case at a great rate. He had taken service with the prisoner, in good faith and simplicity, four years ago. He had asked the prisoner, aboard the Calais packet, if he wanted a handy fellow, and the prisoner had engaged him. He had not asked the prisoner to take the handy fellow as an act of charity—never thought of such a thing. He began to have suspicions of the prisoner, and to keep an eye upon him, soon afterwards. In arranging his clothes, while travelling, he had seen similar lists to these in the prisoner's pockets, over and over again. He had taken these lists from the drawer of the prisoner's desk. He had not put them there first. He had seen the prisoner show these identical lists to French gentlemen at Calais, and similar lists to French gentlemen, both at Calais and Boulogne.

loved his country, and couldn't bear it, and had given information. He had never been suspected of stealing a silver teapot, he had been maligned respecting a mustard-pot, but it turned out to be only a plated one. He had known the last witness seven or eight years; but that was merely a coincidence. He didn't call it a particularly curious coincidence; most coincidences were curious. Neither did he call it a curious coincidence that true patriotism was *his* only motive too. He was a true Briton, and hoped there were many like him.

The blue-flies buzzed again, and Mr. Attorney-General called Mr. Jarvis Lorry.

"Mr. Jarvis Lorry, are you a clerk in Tellson's bank?"

"I am."

"On a certain Friday night in November one thousand seven hundred and seventy-five, did business occasion you to travel between London and Dover by the mail?"

"It did."

"Were there any other passengers in the mail?"

"Two."

"Did they alight on the road in the course of the night?"

"They did."

"Mr. Lorry, look upon the prisoner. Was he one of those two passengers?"

"I cannot undertake to say that he was."

"Does he resemble either of these two passengers?"

"Both were so wrapped up, and the night was so dark, and we were all so reserved, that I cannot undertake to say even that."

"Mr. Lorry, look again upon the prisoner. Supposing him wrapped up as those two passengers were, is there anything in his bulk and stature to render it unlikely that he was one of them?"

"No."

"You will not swear, Mr. Lorry, that he was not one of them?"

"No."

"So at least you say he may have been one of them?"

"Yes. Except that I remember them both to have been—like myself—timorous of highwaymen, and the prisoner has not a timorous air."

"Did you ever see a counterfeit of timidity, Mr. Lorry?"

"I certainly have seen that."

"Mr. Lorry look once more upon the prisoner. Have you seen him to your certain knowledge, before?"

"I have."

"When?"

"I was returning from France a few days afterwards.

and, at Calais, the prisoner came on board the packet-ship in which I returned, and made the voyage with me."

"At what hour did he come on board?"

"At a little after midnight."

"In the dead of the night. Was he the only passenger who came on board at that untimely hour?"

"He happened to be the only one."

"Never mind about that 'happening,' Mr. Lorry. He was the only passenger who came on board in the dead of the night?"

"He was."

"Were you travelling alone, Mr. Lorry, or with any companion?"

"With two companions. A gentleman and a lady. They are here."

"They are here. Had you any conversation with the prisoner?"

"Hardly any. The weather was stormy, and the passage long and rough, and I lay on a sofa, almost from shore to shore."

"Miss Manette!"

The young lady, to whom all eyes had been turned before, and were now turned again, stood up where she had sat. Her father rose with her, and kept her hand drawn through his arm.

"Miss Manette, look upon the prisoner."

To be confronted with such pity, and such earnest youth and beauty, was far more trying to the accused than to be confronted with all the crowd. Standing, as it were, apart with her on the edge of his grave, not all the staring curiosity that looked on, could, for the moment, nerve him to remain quite still. His hurried right hand parcelled out the herbs before him into imaginary beds of flowers in a garden; and his efforts to control and steady his breathing, shook the lips from which the colour rushed to his heart. The buzz of the great flies was loud again.

"Miss Manette, have you seen the prisoner before?"

"Yes, sir."

"Where?"

"On board of the packet-ship just now referred to, sir, and on the same occasion."

"You are the young lady just now referred to?"

"Oh! most unhappily, I am!"

The plaintive tone of her compassion merged into the less musical voice of the Judge, as he said, something fiercely: "Answer the questions put to you, and make no remarks upon them."

"Miss Manette, had you any conversation with the prisoner on that passage across the Channel?"

“Yes, sir.”

“Recal it.”

In the midst of a profound stillness, she faintly began :

“When the gentleman came on board—”

“Do you mean the prisoner?” inquired the Judge, knitting his brows.

“Yes, my Lord.”

“Then say the prisoner.”

“When the prisoner came on board, he noticed that my father,” turning her eyes lovingly to him as he stood beside her, “was much fatigued and in a very weak state of health. My father was so reduced, that I was afraid to take him out of the air, and I had made a bed for him on the deck near the cabin steps, and I sat on the deck at his side to take care of him. There were no other passengers that night, but we four. The prisoner was so good as to beg permission to advise me how I could shelter my father from the wind and weather, better than I had done. I had not known how to do it well, not understanding how the wind would set when we were out of the harbour. He did it for me. He expressed great goodness and kindness for my father’s state, and I am sure he felt it. That was the manner of our beginning to speak together.”

“Let me interrupt you for a moment. Had he come on board alone?”

“No.”

“How many were with him?”

“Two French gentlemen.”

“Had they conferred together?”

“They had conferred together until the last moment, when it was necessary for the French gentleman to be landed in their boat.”

“Had any papers been handed about among them, similar to these lists?”

“Some papers had been handed about among them, but I don’t know what papers.”

“Like these in shape and size?”

“Possibly, but indeed I don’t know, although they stood whispering very near to me ; because they stood at the top of the cabin steps to have the light of the lamp that was hanging there ; it was a dull lamp, and they spoke very low, and I did not hear what they said, and saw only that they looked at papers.”

“Now, to the prisoner’s conversation, Miss Manette.”

“The prisoner was as open in his confidence with me—which arose out of my helpless situation—as he was kind, and good, and useful to my father. I hope,” bursting into tears, “I may not repay him by doing him harm to-day.”

Buzzing from the blue-flies.

“Miss Manette, if the prisoner does not perfectly understand that you give the evidence which it is your duty to give—which you must give—and which you cannot escape from giving—with great unwillingness, he is the only person present in that condition. Please to go on.”

“He told me that he was travelling on business of a delicate and difficult nature, which might get people into trouble, and that he was therefore travelling under an assumed name. He said that this business had, within a few days, taken him to France, and might, at intervals, take him backwards and forwards between France and England for a long time to come.”

“Did he say anything about America, Miss Manette? Be particular.”

“He tried to explain to me how that quarrel had arisen, and he said that, so far as he could judge, it was a wrong and foolish one on England’s part. He added, in a jesting way, that perhaps George Washington might gain almost as great a name in history as George the Third. But there was no harm in his way of saying this: it was said laughingly, and to beguile the time.”

Any strongly marked expression of face on the part of a chief actor in a scene of great interest to whom many eyes are directed, will be unconsciously imitated by the spectators. Her forehead was painfully anxious and intent as she gave this evidence, and, in the pauses when she stopped for the Judge to write it down, watched its effect upon the Counsel for and against. Among the lookers-on there was the same expression in all quarters of the court; insomuch, that a great majority of the foreheads there, might have been mirrors reflecting the witness, when the Judge looked up from his notes to glare at that tremendous heresy about George Washington.

Mr. Attorney-General now signified to my Lord, that he deemed it necessary, as a matter of precaution and form, to call the young lady’s father, Doctor Manette. Who was called accordingly.

“Doctor Manette, look upon the prisoner. Have you ever seen him before?”

“Once. When he called at my lodgings in London. Some three years, or three years and a half ago.”

“Can you identify him as your fellow-passenger, on board the packet, or speak to his conversation with your daughter?”

“Sir, I can do neither.”

“Is there any particular and special reason for your being unable to do either?”

He answered in a low voice, “There is.”

“Has it been your misfortune to undergo a long impris-

onment, without trial, or even accusation, in your native country, Doctor Manette?"

He answered, in a tone that went to every heart, "A long imprisonment."

"Were you newly released on the occasion in question?"

"They tell me so."

Have you no remembrance of the occasion?"

"None. My mind is a blank, from some time—I cannot even say what time—when I employed myself, in my captivity, in making shoes, to the time when I found myself living in London with my dear daughter here. She had become familiar to me, when a gracious God restored my faculties; but, I am quite unable even to say how she had become familiar. I have no remembrance of the process."

Mr. Attorney-General sat down, and the father and daughter sat down together.

A singular circumstance then arose in the case. The object in hand, being, to show that the prisoner went down, with some fellow-plotter untracked, in the Dover mail on that Friday night in November five years ago, and got out of the mail in the night, as a blind, at a place where he did not remain, but from which he travelled back some dozen miles or more, to a garrison and dockyard, and there collected information; a witness was called to identify him as having been at the precise time required, in the coffee-room of an hotel in that garrison-and-dockyard town, waiting for another person. The prisoner's counsel was cross-examining this witness with no result, except that he had never seen the prisoner on any other occasion, when the wigged gentleman who had all this time been looking at the ceiling of the court, wrote a word or two on a little piece of paper, screwed it up, and tossed it to him. Opening this piece of paper in the next pause, the counsel looked with great attention and curiosity at the prisoner.

"You say again you are quite sure that *it was* the prisoner?"

The witness was quite sure.

"Did you ever see anybody very like the prisoner?"

Not so like (the witness said), as that he could be mistaken.

"Look well for upon that gentleman, my learned friend, there," pointing to him who had tossed the paper over, "and then look well upon the prisoner. How say you? Are they very like each other?"

Allowing for my learned friend's appearance being careless and slovenly, if not debauched, they were sufficiently like each other to surprise, not only the witness, but everybody present, when they were thus brought into

comparison. My Lord being prayed to bid my learned friend lay aside his wig, and giving no very gracious consent, the likeness became much more remarkable. My Lord inquired of Mr. Stryver (the prisoner's counsel), whether they were next to try Mr. Carton (name of my learned friend) for treason? But, Mr. Stryver replied to my Lord, no ; but he would ask the witness to tell him whether what happened once, might happen twice ; whether he would have been so confident if he had seen this illustration of his rashness sooner ; whether he would be so confident, having seen it ; and more The upshot of which, was, to smash this witness like a crockery vessel, and shiver his part of the case to useless lumber.

Mr. Cruncher had by this time taken quite a lunch of rust off his fingers, in his following of the evidence. He had now to attend while Mr. Stryver fitted the prisoner's case on the jury, like a compact suit of clothes ; showing them how the patriot, Barsad, was a hired spy and traitor, an unblushing trafficker in blood, and one of the greatest scoundrels upon earth since accursed Judas—which he certainly did look rather like. How the virtuous servant, Cly, was his friend and partner, and was worthy to be ; how the watchful eyes of those forgers and false swearers had rested on the prisoner as a victim, because some family affairs in France, he being of French extraction, did require his making those passages across the Channel—though what those affairs were, a consideration for others who were near and dear to him, forbid him, even for his life, to disclose. How the evidence that had been warped and wrested from the young lady, whose anguish in giving it they had witnessed, came to nothing, involving the mere little innocent gallantries and politenesses likely to pass between any young gentleman and young lady so thrown together :—with the exception of that reference to George Washington, which was altogether too extravagant and impossible, to be regarded in any other light than as a monstrous joke. How it would be a weakness in the government to break down in this attempt to practise for popularity on the lowest national antipathies and fears, and therefore Mr. Attorney-General had made the most of it ; how, nevertheless, it rested upon nothing, save that vile and infamous character of evidence too often disfiguring such cases, and of which the State Trials of this country were full. But, there My Lord interposed (with as grave a face as if it had not been true), saying that he could not sit upon that Bench and suffer those allusions.

Mr. Stryver then called his few witnesses, and Mr. Cruncher had next to attend while Mr. Attorney-General

turned the whole suit of clothes Mr. Stryver had fitted on the jury, inside out ; showing how Barsad and Cly were even a hundred times better than he had thought them, and the prisoner a hundred times worse. Lastly, came My Lord himself, turning the suit of clothes, now inside out, now outside in, but on the whole decidedly trimming and shaping them into grave-clothes for the prisoner.

And now, the jury turned to consider, and the great flies swarmed again.

Mr. Carton, who had so long sat looking at the ceiling of the court, changed neither his place nor his attitude, even in his excitement. While his learned friend, Mr. Stryver, massing his papers before him, whispered with those who sat near, and from time to time glanced anxiously at the jury ; while all the spectators moved more or less, and grouped themselves anew ; while even My Lord himself arose from his seat, and slowly paced up and down his platform, not unattended by a suspicion in the minds of the audience that his state was feverish ; this one man sat leaning back, with his torn gown half off him, his untidy wig put on just as it had happened to light on his head after its removal, his hands in his pockets, and his eyes on the ceiling as they had been all day. Something especially reckless in his demeanour, not only gave him a disreputable look, but so diminished the strong resemblance he undoubtedly bore to the prisoner (which his momentary earnestness, when they were compared together, had strengthened), that many of the lookers-on, taking note of him now, said to one another they would hardly have thought the two were so alike. Mr. Cruncher made the observation to his next neighbour, and added, "I'd hold half a guinea that *he* don't get no law-work to do. Don't look like the sort of a one to get any, do he ?"

Yet, this Mr. Carton took in more of the details of the scene than he appeared to take in ; for now, when Miss Manette's head dropped upon her father's breast, he was the first to see it, and to say audibly : "Officer ! look to that young lady. Help the gentleman to take her out. Don't you see she will fall !"

There was much commiseration for her as she was removed, and much sympathy with her father. It had evidently been a great distress to him, to have the days of his imprisonment recalled. He had shown strong internal agitation when he was questioned, and that pondering or brooding look which made him old, had been upon him, like a heavy cloud, ever since. As he passed out, the jury, who had turned back and paused a moment, spoke, through their foreman.

They were not agreed, and wished to retire. My Lord (perhaps with George Washington on his mind) showed some surprise that they were not agreed, but signified his pleasure that they should retire under watch and ward, and retired himself. The trial had lasted all day, and the lamps in the court were now being lighted. It began to be rumoured that the jury would be out a long while. The spectators dropped off to get refreshment, and the prisoner withdrew to the back of the dock, and sat down.

Mr. Lorry, who had gone out when the young lady and her father went out, now reappeared, and beckoned to Jerry: who in the slackened interest, could easily get near him.

"Jerry, if you wish to take something to eat, you can. But, keep in the way. You will be sure to hear when the Jury come in. Don't be a moment behind them, for I want you to take the verdict back to the bank. You are the quickest messenger I know, and will get to Temple Bar long before I can."

Jerry had just enough forehead to knuckle, and he knuckled it in acknowledgment of this communication and a shilling. Mr. Carton came up at the moment, and touched Mr. Lorry on the arm.

"How is the young lady?"

"She is greatly distressed; but her father is comforting her, and she feels the better for being out of court."

"I'll tell the prisoner so. It won't do for a respectable bank-gentleman like you, to be seen speaking to him publicly, you know."

Mr. Lorry reddened, as if he were conscious of having debated the point in his mind, and Mr. Carton made his way to the outside of the bar. The way out of court lay in that direction, and Jerry followed him, all eyes, ears, and spikes.

"Mr. Darnay!"

The prisoner came forward directly.

"You will naturally be anxious to hear of the witness, Miss Manette. She will do very well. You have seen the worst of her agitation."

"I am deeply sorry to have been the cause of it. Could you tell her so for me, with my fervent acknowledgments?"

"Yes, I could. I will, if you ask it."

Mr. Carton's manner was so careless as to be almost insolent. He stood, half turned from the prisoner, lounging with his elbow against the bar.

"I do ask it. Accept my cordial thanks."

"What," said Carton, still only half turned towards him, "do you expect, Mr. Darnay?"

"The worst."

"It's the wisest thing to expect, and the likeliest. But I think their withdrawing is in your favour."

Loitering on the way out of court not being allowed, Jerry heard no more; but left them—so like each other in feature, so unlike each other in manner—standing side by side, both reflected in the glass above them.

An hour and a half limped heavily away in the thief-and-rascal-crowded passages below, even though assisted off with mutton pies and ale. The hoarse messenger, uncomfortably seated on a form after taking that repast, had dropped into a doze, when a loud murmur and a rapid tide of people setting up the stairs that led to the court, carried him along with them.

"Jerry! Jerry!" Mr. Lorry was already calling at the door when he got there.

"Here, sir! It's a fight to get back again. Here I am, sir?"

Mr. Lorry handed him a paper through the throng. "Quick! Have you got it?"

"Yes, sir."

Hastily written on the paper was the word "ACQUITTED."

"If you had sent the message, 'Recalled to Life,' again," muttered Jerry, as he turned, "I should have known what you meant, this time."

He had no opportunity of saying, or so much as thinking anything else, until he was clear of the Old Bailey; for, the crowd came pouring out with a vehemence that nearly took him off his legs, and a loud buzz swept into the street as if the baffled blue-flies were dispersing in search of other carrion.

CHAPTER IV.

Congratulatory.

FROM the dimly-lighted passages of the court, the last sediment of the human stew that had been boiling there all day, was straining off, when Doctor Manette, Lucie Manette his daughter, Mr. Lorry, the solicitor for the defence, and its counsel Mr. Stryver, stood gathered around Mr. Charles Darnay—just released—congratulating him on his escape from death.

It would have been difficult by a far brighter light, to recognise in Doctor Manette, intellectual of face and upright of bearing, the shoemaker of the garret in Paris. Yet, no one could have looked at him twice, without looking again: even though the opportunity of observation had not extended to the mournful cadence of his low grave voice, and to the abstraction that overclouded

him fitfully, without any apparent reason. While one external cause, and that a reference to his long lingering agony, would always—as on the trial—evoke this condition from the depths of his soul, it was also in its nature to arise of itself, and to draw a gloom over him, as incomprehensible to those unacquainted with his story as if they had seen the shadow of the actual Bastille thrown upon him by a summer sun, when the substance was three hundred miles away.

Only his daughter had the power of charming this black brooding from his mind. She was the golden thread that united him to a Past beyond his misery, and to a Present beyond his misery: and the sound of her voice, the light of her face, the touch of her hand, had a strong beneficial influence with him almost always. Not absolutely always, for she could recal some occasions on which her power had failed; but, they were few and slight, and she believed them over.

Mr. Darnay had kissed her hand fervently and gratefully, and had turned to Mr. Stryver, whom he warmly thanked. Mr. Stryver, a man of little more than thirty, but looking twenty years older than he was, stout, loud, red, bluff, and free from any drawback of delicacy, had a pushing way of shouldering himself (morally and physically) into companies and conversations, that argued well for his shouldering his way up in life.

He still had his wig and gown on, and he said, squaring himself at his late client to that degree that he squeezed the innocent Mr. Lorry clean out of the group: "I am glad to have brought you off with honour, Mr. Darnay. It was an infamous prosecution, grossly infamous; but not the less likely to succeed, on that account."

"You have laid me under an obligation to you for life—in two senses," said his late client, taking his hand.

"I have done my best for you, Mr. Darnay; and my best is as good as another man's, I believe."

It clearly being incumbent on somebody to say, "Much better," Mr. Lorry said it; perhaps not quite disinterestedly, but with the interested object of squeezing himself back again.

"You think so?" said Mr. Stryver. "Well! you have been present all day, and you ought to know. You are a man of business, too."

"And as such," quoth Mr. Lorry, whom the counsel learned in the law had now shouldered back into the group, just as he had previously shouldered him out of it—"as such, I will appeal to Doctor Manette, to break up this conference and order us all to our homes. Miss Lucie

looks ill, Mr. Darnay has had a terrible day, we are worn out."

"Speak for yourself, Mr. Lorry," said Stryver; "I have a night's work to do yet. Speak for yourself."

"I speak for myself," answered Mr. Lorry, "and for Mr. Darney, and for Miss Lucie, and—Miss Lucie do you not think I may speak for us all?" He asked her the question pointedly, and with a glance at her father.

His face had become frozen, as it were, in a very curious look at Darnay: an intent look, deepening into a frown of dislike and distrust, not even unmixed with fear. With this strange expression on him his thoughts had wandered away.

"My father," said Lucie, softly laying her hand on his. He slowly shook the shadow off, and turned to her.

"Shall we go home, my father?"

With a long breath, he answered, "Yes."

The friends of the acquitted prisoner had dispersed, under the impression—which he himself had originated—that he would not be released that night. The lights were nearly all extinguished in the passages, the iron gates were being closed with a jar and a rattle, and the dismal place was deserted until to-morrow morning's interest of gallows, pillory, whipping-post, and branding-iron, should repeople it. Walking between her father and Mr. Darnay, Lucie Manette passed into the open air. A hackney-coach was called, and the father and daughter departed in it.

Mr. Stryver had left them in the passages, to shoulder his way back to the robing-room. Another person who had not joined the group, or interchanged a word with any of them, but who had been leaning against the wall where its shadow was darkest, had silently strolled out after the rest, and had looked on until the coach drove away. He now stepped up to where Mr. Lorry and Mr. Darnay stood upon the pavement.

"So, Mr. Lorry! Men of business may speak to Mr. Darnay now?"

Nobody had made any acknowledgment of Mr. Carton's part in the day's proceedings; nobody had known of it. He was unrobed, and was none the better for it in appearance.

"If you knew what a conflict goes on in the business mind when the business mind is divided between good-natured impulse and business appearances, you would be amused, Mr. Darnay."

Mr. Lorry reddened, and said warmly, "You have mentioned that before, sir. We men of business, who serve a House, are not our own masters. We have to think of the House more than ourselves."

"I know, I know," rejoined Mr. Carton, carelessly.

"Don't be nettled, Mr. Lorry. You are as good as another, I have no doubt ; better, I dare say."

"And indeed, sir," pursued Mr. Lorry, not minding him, "I really don't know what you have to do with the matter. If you'll excuse me, as very much your elder, for saying so, I really don't know that it is your business."

"Business ! Bless you, *I* have no business," said Mr. Carton.

"It is a pity you have not, sir."

"I think so too."

"If you had," pursued Mr. Lorry, "perhaps you would attend to it."

"Lord love you, no !—I shouldn't," said Mr. Carton.

"Well, sir !" cried Mr. Lorry, thoroughly heated by his indifference, "business is a very good thing, and a very respectable thing. And, sir, if business imposes its restraints and its silences and impediments, Mr. Darnay as a young gentleman of generosity knows how to make allowance for that circumstance. Mr. Darnay, good night, God bless you, sir ! I hope you have been this day preserved for a prosperous and happy life.—Chair there !"

Perhaps a little angry with himself, as well as with the barrister, Mr. Lorry bustled into the chair, and was carried off to Tellson's. Carton, who smelt of port wine, and did not appear to be quite sober, laughed then, and turned to Darnay :

"This is a strange chance that throws you and me together. This must be a strange night to you, standing alone here with your counterpart on these street-stones ?"

"I hardly seem yet," returned Charles Darnay, "to belong to this world again."

"I don't wonder at it ; it's not so long since you were pretty far advanced on your way to another. You speak faintly."

"I begin to think I *am* faint."

"Then why the devil don't you dine ? I dined, myself, while those numskulls were deliberating which world you should belong to—this, or some other. Let me show you the nearest tavern to dine well at."

Drawing his arm through his own, he took him down Ludgate-hill to Fleet-street, and so, up a covered way, into a tavern. Here, they were shown into a little room, where Charles Darnay was soon recruiting his strength with a good plain dinner and good wine ; while Carton sat opposite to him at the same table, with his separate bottle of port before him, and his fully half-insolent manner upon him.

"Do you feel, yet, that you belong to this terrestrial scheme again, Mr. Darnay?"

"I am frightfully confused regarding time and place; but I am so far mended as to feel that."

"It must be an immense satisfaction!"

He said it bitterly, and filled up his glass again: which was a large one.

"As to me, the greatest desire I have, is to forget that I belong to it. It has no good in it for me—except wine like this—nor I for it. So we are not much alike in that particular. Indeed, I begin to think we are not much alike in any particular, you and I."

Confused by the emotion of the day, and feeling that his being there with this Double of coarse deportment, to be like a dream, Charles Darnay was at a loss how to answer; finally answered not at all.

"Now your dinner is done," Carton presently said, "why don't you call a health, Mr. Darnay; why don't you give your toast?"

"What health? What toast?"

"Why it's on the tip of your tongue. It ought to be, it must be, I'll swear it's there."

"Miss Manette, then!"

"Miss Manette, then!"

Looking his companion full in his face while he drank the toast, Carton flung his glass over his shoulder against the wall, where it shivered to pieces; then, rang the bell, and ordered in another.

"That's a fair young lady to hand to a coach in the dark, Mr. Darnay!" he said filling his new goblet.

A slight frown and a laconic "Yes," was the answer.

"That's a fair young lady to be pitied by and wept for by! How does it feel? Is it worth being tried for one's life, to be the object of such sympathy and compassion, Mr. Darnay?"

Again Darnay answered not a word.

"She was mightily pleased to have your message, when I gave it her. Not that she showed she was pleased, but I suppose she was."

The allusion served as a timely reminder to Darnay that this disagreeable companion had, of his own free will, assisted him in the strait of the day. He turned the dialogue to that point, and thanked him for it.

"I neither want any thanks, nor merit any," was the careless rejoinder. "It was nothing to do, in the first place; and I don't know why I did it, in the second. Mr. Darnay, let me ask you a question."

"Willingly, and a small return for your good offices."

"Do you think I particularly like you?"

"Really, Mr. Carton," returned the other, oddly disconcerted, "I have not asked myself the question."

“But ask yourself the question now.”

“You have acted as if you do; but I don’t think you do.”

“I don’t think I do,” said Carton. “I begin to have a very good opinion of your understanding.”

“Nevertheless,” pursued Darnay, rising to ring the bell, “there is nothing in that, I hope, to prevent my calling the reckoning, and our parting without ill-blood on either side.”

Carton rejoicing, “Nothing in life!” Darnay rang. “Do you call the whole reckoning?” said Carton. On his answering in the affirmative, “Then bring me another pint of this same wine, drawer, and come and wake me at ten.”

The bill being paid, Charles Darnay rose and wished him good night. Without returning the wish, Carton rose too, with something of a threat or defiance in his manner, and said, “A last word, Mr. Darnay: you think I am drunk?”

“I think you have been drinking, Mr. Carton.”

“Think? You know I have been drinking.”

“Since I must say so, I know it.”

“Then you shall likewise know why. I am a disappointed drudge, sir. I care for no man on earth, and no man on earth cares for me.”

“Much to be regretted. You might have used your talents better.”

“May be so, Mr. Darnay; may be not. Don’t let your sober face elate you, however; you don’t know what it may come to. Good night!”

When he was left alone, this strange being took up a candle, went to a glass that hung against the wall, and surveyed himself minutely in it.

“Do you particularly like the man?” he muttered, at his own image; “why should you particularly like a man who resembles you? There is nothing in you to like; you know that. Ah, confound you! What a change you have made in yourself! A good reason for taking to a man, that he shows you what you have fallen away from, and what you might have been! Change places with him, and would you have been looked at by those blue eyes as he was, and commiserated by that agitated face as he was? Come on, and have it out in plain words! You hate the fellow.”

He resorted to his pint of wine for consolation, drank it all in a few minutes, and fell asleep on his arms, with his hair straggling over the table, and a long winding-sheet in the candle dripping down upon him.

CHAPTER V.

The Jackal.

THOSE were drinking days, and most men drank hard. So very great is the improvement Time has brought about in such habits, that a moderate statement of the quantity of wine and punch which one man would swallow in the course of a night, without any detriment to his reputation as a perfect gentleman, would seem, in these days, a ridiculous exaggeration. The learned profession of the Law was certainly not behind any other learned profession in its Bacchanalian propensities; neither was Mr. Stryver, already fast shouldering his way to a large and lucrative practice, behind his compeers in this particular, any more than in the drier parts of the legal race.

A favourite at the Old Bailey, and eke at the Sessions, Mr. Stryver had begun cautiously to hew away the lower staves of the ladder on which he mounted. Sessions and Old Bailey had now to summon their favourite, especially, to their longing arms; and shouldering itself towards the visage of the Lord Chief Justice in the Court of King's Bench, the florid countenance of Mr. Stryver might be daily seen, bursting out of the bed of wigs, like a great sunflower pushing its way at the sun from among a rank garden-full of flaring companions.

It had once been noted at the Bar, that while Mr. Stryver was a glib man, and an unscrupulous, and a ready, and a bold, he had not that faculty of extracting the essence from a heap of statements, which is among the most striking and necessary of the advocate's accomplishments. But, a remarkable improvement came upon him as to this. The more business he got, the greater his power seemed to grow of getting at its pith and marrow; and however late at night he sat carousing with Sydney Carton, he always had his points at his fingers' ends in the morning.

Sydney Carton, eldest and most unpromising of men, was Stryver's great ally. What the two drank together, between Hilary Term and Michaelmas, might have floated a king's ship. Stryver never had a case in hand, anywhere, but Carton was there with his hands in his pockets, staring at the ceiling of the court; they went the same Circuit, and even there they prolonged their usual orgies late into the night, and Carton was rumoured to be seen at broad day, going home stealthily and unsteadily to his lodgings, like a dissipated cat. At last, it began to get about, among such as were interested in

the matter, that although Sydney Carton would never be a lion, he was an amazingly good jackal, and that he rendered suit and service to Stryver in that humble capacity.

"Ten o'clock, sir," said the man at the tavern, whom he had charged to wake him—"ten o'clock, sir."

"*What's the matter?*"

"Ten o'clock, sir."

"What do you mean? Ten o'clock at night?"

"Yes, sir. Your honour told me to call you."

"Oh! I remember. Very well, very well."

After a few dull efforts to get to sleep again, which the man dexterously combatted by stirring the fire continuously for five minutes, he got up, tossed his hat on, and walked out. He turned into the Temple, and, having revived himself by twice pacing the pavements of King's Bench-walk and Paper-buildings, turned into the Stryver chambers.

The Stryver clerk, who never assisted in these conferences, had gone home, and the Stryver principal opened the door. He had his slippers on, and a loose bedgown, and his throat was bare for his greater ease. He had that rather wild, strained, seared marking about the eyes, which may be observed in all free livers of his class, from the portrait of Jeffries downward, and which can be traced, under various disguises of Art through the portraits of every Drinking Age.

"You are a little late, Memory," said Stryver.

"About the usual time; it may be a quarter of an hour later."

They went into a dingy room lined with books and littered with papers, where there was a blazing fire. A kettle steamed upon the hob, and in the midst of the wreck of papers a table shone, with plenty of wine upon it, and brandy, and rum, and sugar, and lemons.

"You have had your bottle, I perceive, Sydney."

"Two to-night, I think. I have been dining with the day's client; or seeing him dine—it's all one!"

"That was a rare point, Sydney, that you brought to bear upon the identification. How did you come by it? When did it strike you?"

"I thought he was rather a handsome fellow, and I thought I should have been much the same sort of fellow, if I had had any luck."

Mr. Stryver laughed, till he shook his precocious paunch.

"You and your luck, Sydney! Get to work, get to work."

Sullenly enough, the jackal loosened his dress, went into an adjoining room, and came back with a large jug of cold water, a basin, and a towel or two. Steeping

the towels in the water, and partially wringing them out, he folded them on his head in a manner hideous to behold, sat down at the table, and said, "Now I am ready!"

"Not much boiling down to be done to-night, Memory," said Mr. Stryver, gaily, as he looked among his papers.

"How much?"

"Only two sets of them."

"Give me the worst first."

"There they are, Sydney. Fire-away!"

The lion then composed himself on his back on a sofa on one side of the drinking-table, while the jackal sat at his own paper-bestrewn table proper, on the other side of it, with the bottles and glasses ready to his hand. Both resorted to the drinking-table without stint, but each in a different way; the lion for the most part reclining with his hands in his waistband, looking at the fire, or occasionally flirting with some lighter document; the jackal, with knitted brows and intent face, so deep in his task, that his eyes did not even follow the hand he stretched out for glass—which often groped about, for a minute or more, before it found the glass for his lips. Two or three times, the matter in hand became so knotty, that the jackal found it imperative on him to get up, and steep his towels anew. From these pilgrimages to the jug and basin, he returned with such eccentricities of damp head-gear as no words can describe; which were made the more ludicrous by his anxious gravity.

At length the jackal had got together a compact repast for the lion, and proceeded to offer it to him. The lion took it with care and caution, made his selections from it, and his remarks upon it, and the jackal assisted both. When the repast was fully discussed, the lion put his hands in his waistband again, and lay down to meditate. The jackal then invigorated himself with a bumper for his throttle, and a fresh application to his head, and applied himself to the collection of a second meal; this was administered to the lion in the same manner, and was not disposed of until the clocks struck three in the morning.

"And now we have done, Sydney, fill a bumper of punch," said Mr. Stryver.

The jackal removed the towels from his head, which had been steaming again, shook himself, yawned, shivered, and complied.

"You were very sound, Sydney, in the matter of those crown witnesses to-day. Every question told."

"I always am sound; am I not?"

"I don't gainsay it. What has roughened your temper? Put some punch to it and smooth it again."

With a deprecatory grunt, the jackal again complied.

"The old Sydney Carton of old Shrewsbury School," said Stryver, nodding his head over him as he reviewed him in the present and the past, "the old seesaw Sydney. Up one minute and down the next; now in spirits and now in despondency!"

"Ah!" returned the other, sighing: "yes! The same Sydney, with the same luck. Even then, I did exercises for other boys, and seldom did my own."

"And why not?"

"God knows. It was my way, I suppose."

He sat, with his hands in his pockets and his legs stretched out before him, looking at the fire.

"Carton," said his friend, squaring himself at him with a bullying air, as if the fire-grate had been the furnace in which sustained endeavour was forged, and the one delicate thing to be done for the old Sydney Carton of old Shrewsbury School was to shoulder him into it, "your way is, and always was, a lame way. You summon no energy and purpose. Look at me."

"Oh, botheration!" returned Sydney, with a lighter and more good-humoured laugh, "don't *you* be moral!"

"How have I done what I have done?" said Stryver; "how do I do what I do?"

"Partly through paying me to help you, I suppose. But it's not worth your while to apostrophise me, or the air, about it; what you want to do, you do. You were always in the front rank, and I was always behind."

"I had to get into the front rank; I was not born there, was I?"

"I was not present at the ceremony; but my opinion is you were," said Carton. At this, he laughed again, and they both laughed.

"Before Shrewsbury, and at Shrewsbury, and ever since Shrewsbury," pursued Carton, "you have fallen into your rank, and I have fallen into mine. Even when we were fellow-students in the Student-Quarter of Paris, picking up French, and French law, and other French crumbs that we didn't get much good of, you were always somewhere, and I was always—nowhere."

"And whose fault was that?"

"Upon my soul, I am not sure that it was not yours. You were always driving and riving and shouldering and pressing, to that restless degree that I had no chance for my life but in rust and repose. It's a gloomy thing, however, to talk about one's own past, with the day breaking. Turn me in some other direction before I go."

"Well then! Pledge me to the pretty witness," said

Stryver, holding up his glass. "Are you turned in a pleasant direction?"

Apparently not, for he became gloomy again.

"Pretty witness," he muttered, looking down into his glass. "I have had enough of witnesses to-day and to-night; who's your pretty witness?"

"The picturesque doctor's daughter, Miss Manette."

"*She* pretty!"

"Is she not?"

"No."

"Why, man alive, she was the admiration of the whole Court!"

"Rot the admiration of the whole Court! Who made the Old Bailey a judge of beauty? She was a golden-haired doll?"

"Do you know, Sydney," said Mr. Stryver, looking at him with sharp eyes, and slowly drawing a hand across his florid face: "do you know, I rather thought, at the time, that you sympathized with the golden-haired doll, and were quick to see what happened to the golden-haired doll?"

"Quick to see what happened! If a girl, doll or no doll, swoons within a yard or two of a man's nose, he can see it without a perspective-glass. I pledge you, but I deny the beauty. And now I'll have no more drink; I'll get to bed."

When his host followed him out on the staircase with a candle, to light him down the stairs, the day was coldly looking in through its grimy windows. When he got out of the house, the air was cold and sad, the dull sky overcast, the river dark and dim, the whole scene like a lifeless desert. And wreaths of dust were spinning round and round before the morning blast, as if the desert-sand had risen far away, and the first spray of it in its advance had begun to overwhelm the city.

Waste forces within him, and a desert all around, this man stood still on his way across a silent terrace, and saw for a moment, lying in the wilderness before him, a mirage of honourable ambition, self-denial and perseverance. In the fair city of this vision, there were airy galleries from which the loves and graces looked upon him, gardens in which the fruits of life hung ripening, waters of Hope that sparkled in his sight. A moment, and it was gone. Climbing to a high chamber in a well of houses, he threw himself down in his clothes on a neglected bed, and its pillow was wet with wasted tears.

Sadly, sadly, the sun rose; it rose upon no sadder sight than the man of good abilities, and good emotions, incapable of their directed exercise, incapable of his own help and his own happiness, sensible of the blight on him, and resigning himself to let it eat him away.

CHAPTER VI.

Hundreds of People.

THE quiet lodgings of Doctor Manette were in a quiet street-corner not far from Soho-square. On the afternoon of a certain fine Sunday when the waves of four months had rolled over the trial for treason, and carried it, as to the public interest and memory, far out to sea, Mr. Jarvis Lorry walked along the sunny streets from Clerkenwell where he lived, on his way to dine with the Doctor. After several relapses into business-absorption, Mr. Lorry had become the Doctor's friend, and the quiet street-corner was the sunny part of his life.

On this certain fine Sunday, Mr. Lorry walked towards Soho, early in the afternoon, for three reasons of habit. Firstly, because, on fine Sundays, he often walked out before dinner, with the Doctor and Lucie ; secondly, because, on unfavourable Sundays, he was accustomed to be with them as the family friend, talking, reading, looking out of window, and generally getting through the day ; thirdly, because he happened to have his own little shrewd doubts to solve, and knew how the ways of the Doctor's household pointed to that time as a likely time for solving them.

A quaint corner than the corner where the Doctor lived, was not to be found in London. There was no way through it, and the front windows of the Doctor's lodgings commanded a pleasant little vista of street that had a congenial air of retirement on it. There were few buildings then, north of the Oxford-road, and forest-trees flourished, and wild flowers grew, and the hawthorn blossomed, in the now vanished fields. As a consequence, country airs circulated in Soho with vigorous freedom, instead of languishing into the parish like stray paupers without a settlement ; and there was many a good south wall, not far off, on which the peaches ripened in their season.

The summer light struck into the corner brilliantly in the earlier part of the day ; but, when the streets grew hot, the corner was in shadow, though not in shadow so remote but that you could see beyond it into a glare of brightness. It was a cool spot, staid but cheerful, a wonderful place for echoes, and a very harbour from the raging streets.

There ought to have been a tranquil bark in such an anchorage, and there was. The Doctor occupied two

floors of a large still house, where several callings purported to be pursued by day, but whereof little was audible any day, and which was shunned by all of them at night. In a building at the back, attainable by a courtyard where a plane-tree rustled its green leaves, church-organs claimed to be made, and silver to be chased, and likewise gold to be beaten by some mysterious giant who had a golden arm starting out of the wall of the front hall—as if he had beaten himself precious, and menaced a similar conversion of all visitors. Very little of these trades, or of a lonely lodger rumoured to live up-stairs, or of a dim coach-trimming maker asserted to have a counting-house below, was ever heard or seen. Occasionally, a stray workman putting his coat on, traversed the hall, or a stranger peered about there, or a distant clink was heard across the court-yard, or a thump from the golden giant. These, however, were only the exceptions required to prove the rule that the sparrows in the plane-tree behind the house, and the echoes in the corner before it, had their own way from Sunday morning into Saturday night.

Doctor Manette received such patients here as his old reputation, and its revival in the floating whispers of his story, brought him. His scientific knowledge, and his vigilance and skill in conducting ingenious experiments, brought him otherwise into moderate request, and he earned as much as he wanted.

These things were within Mr. Jarvis Lorry's knowledge, thoughts, and notice, when he rang the door-bell of the tranquil house in the corner, on the fine Sunday afternoon.

“ Doctor Manette at home ? ”

Expected home.

“ Miss Lucie at home ? ”

Expected home.

“ Miss Pross at home ? ”

Possibly at home, but of a certainty impossible for handmaid to anticipate intentions of Miss Pross, as to admission or denial of the fact.

“ As I am at home myself,” said Mr. Lorry, “ I'll go up-stairs.”

Although the Doctor's daughter had known nothing of the country of her birth, she appeared to have innately derived from it that ability to make much of little means, which is one of its most useful and most agreeable characteristics. Simple as the furniture was, it was set off by so many little adornments, of no value but for their taste and fancy, that its effect was delightful. The disposition of everything in the rooms, from the largest object to the least ; the arrangement of colours, the elegant variety and contrast obtained by thrift in trifles, by deli-

cate hands, clear eyes, and good sense ; were at once so pleasant in themselves, and so expressive of their originator, that, as Mr. Lorry stood looking about him, the very chairs and tables seemed to ask him, with something of that peculiar expression which he knew so well by this time, whether he approved ?

There were three rooms on a floor, and, the doors by which they communicated being put open that the air might pass freely through them all, Mr. Lorry, smilingly observant of that fanciful resemblance which he detected all around him, walked from one to another. The first was the best room, and in it were Lucie's birds, and flowers, and books, and desk, and work-table, and box of water-colours ; the second was the Doctor's consulting-room, used also as the dining-room ; the third, changingly speckled by the rustle of the plane-tree in the yard, was the Doctor's bedroom, and there, in a corner, stood the disused shoemaker's bench and tray of tools, much as it had stood on the fifth floor of the dismal house by the wine-shop, in the suburb of Saint Antoine in Paris.

"I wonder," said Mr. Lorry, pausing in his looking about, "that he keeps that reminder of his sufferings by him !"

"And why wonder at that ?" was the abrupt inquiry that made him start.

It proceeded from Miss Pross, the wild red woman, strong of hand, whose acquaintance he had first made at the Royal George Hotel at Dover, and had since improved.

"I should have thought—" Mr. Lorry began.

"Pooh ! You'd have thought !" said Miss Pross ; and Mr. Lorry left off.

"How do you do ?" inquired that lady then—sharply, and yet as if to express that she bore him no malice.

"I am pretty well, I thank you," answered Mr. Lorry, with meekness, "how are you ?"

"Nothing to boast of," said Miss Pross.

"Indeed ?"

"Ah ! indeed !" said Miss Pross. "I am very much put out about my Ladybird."

"Indeed ?"

"For gracious sake say something else besides 'indeed,' or you'll fidget me to death," said Miss Pross : whose character (dissociated from stature) was shortness.

"Really, then ?" said Mr. Lorry as an amendment.

"Really, is bad enough," returned Miss Pross, "but better. Yes, I am very much put out."

"May I ask the cause ?"

"I don't want dozens of people who are not at all worthy of Ladybird, to come here looking after her," said Miss Pross.

"Do dozens come for that purpose?"

"Hundreds," said Miss Pross.

It was characteristic of this lady (as of some other people before her time and since) that whenever her original proposition was questioned, she exaggerated it.

"Dear me!" said Mr. Lorry, as the safest remark he could think of.

"I have lived with the darling—or the darling has lived with me, and paid me for it; which she certainly should never have done, you may take your affidavit, if I could have afforded to keep either myself or her for nothing—since she was ten years old. And it's really very hard," said Miss Pross.

Not seeing with precision what was very hard, Mr. Lorry shook his head; using that important part of himself as a sort of fairy cloak that would fit anything.

"All sorts of people who are not in the least degree worthy of the pet, are always turning up," said Miss Pross. "When you began it—"

"I began it, Miss Pross?"

"Didn't you? Who brought her father to life?"

"Oh! If *that* was beginning it—" said Mr. Lorry.

"It wasn't ending it, I suppose? I say, when you began it, it was hard enough; not that I have any fault to find with Doctor Manette, except that he is not worthy of such a daughter, which is no imputation on him, for it was not to be expected that anybody should be, under any circumstances. But it really is doubly and trebly hard to have crowds and multitudes of people turning up after him (I could have forgiven him), to take Ladybird's affections away from me."

Mr. Lorry knew Miss Pross to be very jealous, but he also knew her by this time to be, beneath the surface of her eccentricity, one of those unselfish creatures—found only among women—who will, for pure love and admiration, bind themselves willing slaves, to youth when they have lost it, to beauty that they never had, to accomplishments that they were never fortunate enough to gain, to bright hopes that never shone upon their own sombre lives. He knew enough of the world to know that there is nothing in it better than the faithful service of the heart; so rendered and so free from any mercenary taint, he had such an exalted respect for it, that, in the retributive arrangements made by his own mind—we all make such arrangements, more or less—he stationed Miss Pross much nearer to the lower Angels than many ladies immeasurably better got up both by Nature and Art, who had balances at Tellson's.

"There never was, nor will be, but one man worthy of Ladybird," said Miss Pross; "and that was my brother Solomon, if he hadn't made a mistake in life."

Here again: Mr. Lorry's inquiries into Miss Pross's personal history, had established the fact that her brother Solomon was a heartless scoundrel who had stripped her of everything she possessed, as a stake to speculate with, and had abandoned her in her poverty for evermore, with no touch of compunction. Miss Pross's fidelity of belief in Solomon (deducting a mere trifle for this slight mistake) was quite a serious matter with Mr. Lorry, and had its weight in his good opinion of her.

"As we happen to be alone for the moment, and are both people of business," he said, when they had got back to the drawing-room, and had sat down there in friendly relations, "let me ask you—does the Doctor, in talking with Lucie, never refer to the shoemaking time, yet?"

"Never."

"And yet keeps that bench and those tools beside him?"

"Ah!" returned Miss Pross, shaking her head. "But I don't say he don't refer to it within himself."

"Do you believe that he thinks of it much?"

"I do," said Miss Pross.

"Do you imagine—" Mr. Lorry had begun, when Miss Pross took him up short with:

"Never imagine anything. Have no imagination at all."

"I stand corrected; do you suppose—you go so far as to suppose, sometimes?"

"Now and then," said Miss Pross.

"Do you suppose," Mr. Lorry went on, with a laughing twinkle in his bright eye, as he looked kindly at her, "that Doctor Manette has any theory of his own, preserved through all those years, relative to the cause of his being so oppressed; perhaps, even to the name of his oppressor?"

"I don't suppose anything about it but what Ladybird tells me."

"And that is—?"

"That she thinks he has."

"Now don't be angry at my asking all these questions because I am a mere dull man of business, and you are a woman of business."

"Dull?" Miss Pross inquired, with placidity.

Rather wishing his modest adjective away, Mr. Lorry replied, "No, no, no. Surely not. To return to business:—Is it not remarkable that Doctor Manette, unquestionably innocent of any crime as we are well assured he is, should never touch upon that question? I

will not say with me, though he had business relations with me many years ago, and we are now intimate ; I will say with the fair daughter to whom he is so devotedly attached, and who is so devotedly attached to him ? Believe me, Miss Pross, I don't approach the topic with you, out of curiosity, but out of zealous interest."

"Well ! To the best of my understanding, and bad's the best you'll tell me," said Miss Pross, softened by the tone of the apology, "he is afraid of the whole subject."

"Afraid ?"

"It's plain enough, I should think, why he may be. It's a dreadful remembrance. Besides that, his loss of himself grew out of it. Not knowing how he lost himself, or how he recovered himself, he may never feel certain of not losing himself again. That alone wouldn't make the subject pleasant, I should think."

It was a profounder remark than Mr. Lorry had looked for. "True," said he, "and fearful to reflect upon. Yet, a doubt lurks in my mind, Miss Pross, whether it is good for Doctor Manette to have that suppression always shut up within him. Indeed, it is this doubt and the uneasiness it sometimes causes me that has led me to our present confidence."

"Can't be helped," said Miss Pross, shaking her head. "Touch that string, and he instantly changes for the worse. Better leave it alone. In short, must leave it alone, like or no like. Sometimes, he gets up in the dead of the night, and will be heard, by us overhead there, walking up and down, walking up and down, in his room. Ladybird has learnt to know then, that his mind is walking up and down, walking up and down, in his old prison. She hurries to him, and they go on together, walking up and down, walking up and down, until he is composed. But he never says a word of the true reason of his restlessness, to her, and she finds it best not to hint at it to him. In silence they go walking up and down together, walking up and down together, till her love and company have brought him to himself."

Notwithstanding Miss Pross's denial of her own imagination, there was a perception of the pain of being monotonously haunted by one sad idea, in her repetition of the phrase, walking up and down, which testified to her possessing such a thing.

The corner has been mentioned as a wonderful corner for echoes ; it had begun to echo so resoundingly to the tread of coming feet, that it seemed as though the very mention of that weary pacing to and fro had set it going.

"Here they are !" said Miss Pross, rising to break up the conference ; "and now we shall have hundreds of people pretty soon !"

It was such a curious corner in its acoustical properties, such a peculiar Ear of a place, that as Mr. Lorry stood at the open window, looking for the father and daughter whose steps he heard, he fancied they would never approach. Not only would the echoes die away, as though the steps had gone; but, echoes of other steps that never came, would be heard in their stead, and would die away for good when they seemed close at hand. However, father and daughter did at last appear, and Miss Pross was ready at the street door to receive them.

Miss Pross was a pleasant sight, albeit wild, and red, and grim, taking off her darling's bonnet when she came up-stairs, and touching it up with the ends of her handkerchief, and blowing the dust off it, and folding her mantle ready for laying by, and smoothing her rich hair with as much pride as she could possibly have taken in her own hair if she had been the vainest and handsomest of women. Her darling was a pleasant sight too, embracing her and thanking her, and protesting against her taking so much trouble for her—which last she only dared to do playfully, or Miss Pross, sorely hurt, would have retired to her own chamber and cried. The Doctor was a pleasant sight too, looking on at them, and telling Miss Pross how she spoilt Lucie, in accents and with eyes that had as much spoiling in them as Miss Pross had, and would have had more if it were possible. Mr. Lorry was a pleasant sight too, beaming at all this in his little wig, and thanking his bachelor stars for having lighted him in his declining years to a Home. But, no Hundreds of people came to see the sights, and Mr. Lorry looked in vain for the fulfilment of Miss Pross's prediction.

Dinner-time, and still no Hundreds of people. In the arrangements of the little household, Miss Pross took charge of the lower regions, and always acquitted herself marvellously. Her dinners, of a very modest quality, were so well cooked and so well served, and so neat in their contrivances, half English and half French, that nothing could be better. Miss Pross's friendship being of the thoroughly practical kind, she had ravaged Soho and the adjacent provinces, in search of impoverished French, who, tempted by shillings and half crowns, would impart culinary mysteries to her. From these decayed sons and daughters of Gaul, she had acquired such wonderful arts, that the woman and girl who formed the staff of domestics regarded her as quite a Sorceress, or Cinderella's Godmother: who would send out for a fowl, a rabbit, a vegetable or two from the garden, and change them into anything she pleased.

On Sundays, Miss Pross dined at the Doctor's table, but on other days persisted in taking her meals at unknown periods, either in the lower regions, or in her own

room on the second floor—a blue chamber, to which no one but her Ladybird ever gained admittance. On this occasion, Miss Pross, responding to Ladybird's pleasant face and pleasant efforts to please her, unbent exceedingly; so the dinner was very pleasant, too.

It was an oppressive day, and, after dinner, Lucie proposed that the wine should be carried out under the plane-tree, and they should sit there in the air. As everything turned upon her and revolved about her, they went out under the plane-tree, and she carried the wine down for the special benefit of Mr. Lorry. She had installed herself some time before, as Mr. Lorry's cup-bearer; and while they sat under the plane-tree, talking, she kept his glass replenished. Mysterious backs and ends of houses peeped at them as they talked, and the plane-tree whispered to them in its own way above their heads.

Still, the Hundreds of people did not present themselves. Mr. Darnay presented himself while they were sitting under the plane-tree, but he was only One.

Doctor Manette received him kindly, and so did Lucie. But, Miss Pross suddenly became afflicted with a twitching in the head and body, and retired into the house. She was not unfrequently the victim of this disorder, as she called it, in familiar conversation, "a fit of the jerks."

The Doctor was in his best condition, and looked specially young. The resemblance between him and Lucie was very strong at such times, and, as they sat side by side, she leaning on his shoulder, and he resting his arm on the back of her chair, it was very agreeable to trace the likeness.

He had been talking all day, on many subjects and with unusual vivacity. "Pray, Doctor Manette," said Mr. Darnay, as they sat under the plane-tree—and he said it in the natural pursuit of the topic in hand, which happened to be the old buildings of London—"have you seen much of the Tower?"

"Lucie and I have been there; but only casually. We have seen enough of it to know that it teems with interest; little more."

"I have been there, as you remember," said Darnay, with a smile, though reddening a little angrily, "in another character, and not in a character that gives facilities for seeing much of it. They told me a curious thing when I was there."

"What was that?" Lucie asked.

"In making some alterations, the workmen came upon an old dungeon, which had been, for many years, built up and forgotten. Every stone of its inner wall was covered with inscriptions which had been carved by prisoners

—dates, names, complaints, and prayers. Upon a corner stone in an angle of the wall, one prisoner who seemed to have gone to execution, had cut, as his last work, three letters. They were done with some very poor instrument, and hurriedly, with an unsteady hand. At first, they were read as D. I. C. ; but, on being more carefully examined, the last letter was found to be G. There was no record or legend of any prisoner with those initials, and many fruitless guesses were made what the name could have been. At length, it was suggested that the letters were not initials, but the complete word, DIG. The floor was examined very carefully under the inscription, and, in the earth beneath a stone, or tile, or some fragment of paving, were found the ashes of a paper, mingled with the ashes of a small leathern case or bag. What the unknown prisoner had written will never be read, but he had written something, and hidden it away to keep it from the gaoler."

"My father!" exclaimed Lucie, "you are ill!"

He had suddenly started up, with his hand to his head. His manner and his look quite terrified them all.

"No, my dear, not ill. There are large drops of rain falling, and they make me start. We had better go in."

He recovered himself almost instantly. Rain was really falling in large drops, and he showed the back of his hand with rain-drops on it. But, he said not a single word in reference to the discovery that had been told of, and, as they went into the house, the business eye of Mr. Lorry, either detected, or fancied it detected, on his face, as he turned towards Charles Darnay, the same singular look that had been upon it when it turned towards him in the passages of the Court House.

He recovered himself so quickly, however, that Mr. Lorry had doubts of his business eye. The arm of the golden giant in the hall was not more steady than he was, when he stopped under it to remark to them that he was not yet proof against slight surprises (if he ever would be), and that the rain had startled him.

Tea-time, and Miss Pross making tea, with another fit of the jerks upon her, and yet no Hundreds of people. Mr. Carton had lounged in, but he made only Two.

The night was so very sultry, that although they sat with doors and windows open, they were overpowered by heat. When the tea-table was done with, they all moved to one of the windows, and looked out into the heavy twilight Lucie sat by her father; Darnay sat beside her; Carton leaned against a window. The curtains were long and white, and some of the thunder-gusts that whirled into the corner, caught them up to the ceiling, and waved them like spectral wings.

"The rain-drops are still falling, large, heavy, and few," said Doctor Manette. "It comes slowly."

"It comes surely," said Carton.

They spoke low, as people watching and waiting mostly do; as people in a dark room, watching and waiting for Lightning, always do.

There was a great hurry in the streets, of people speeding away to get shelter before the storm broke; the wonderful corner for echoes resounded with the echoes of footsteps coming and going, yet not a footstep was there.

"A multitude of people, and yet a solitude!" said Darnay, when they had listened for a while.

"Is it not impressive, Mr. Darnay?" asked Lucie. "Sometimes, I have sat here of an evening, until I have fancied—but even the shade of a foolish fancy makes me shudder to-night, when all is so black and solemn—"

"Let us shudder too. We may know what it is?"

"It will seem nothing to you. Such whims are only impressive as we originate them, I think; they are not to be communicated. I have sometimes sat alone here of an evening, listening, until I have made the echoes out to be the echoes of all the footsteps that are coming by-and-by into our lives."

"There is a great crowd coming one day into our lives, if that be so," Sydney Carton struck in, in his moody way.

The footsteps were incessant, and the hurry of them became more and more rapid. The corner echoed and re-echoed with the tread of feet; some, as it seemed, under the windows; some, as it seemed, in the room; some coming, some going, some breaking off, some stopping altogether; all in the distant streets, and not one within sight.

"Are all these footsteps destined to come to all of us, Miss Manette, or are we to divide them among us?"

"I don't know, Mr. Darnay; I told you that it was a foolish fancy, but you asked for it. When I have yielded myself to it, I have been alone, and then I have imagined them the footsteps of the people who are to come into my life, and my father's."

"I take them into mine!" said Carton. *I* ask no questions and make no stipulations. There is a great crowd bearing down upon us, Miss Manette, and I see them!—by the Lightning." He added the last words, after there had been a vivid flash which had shown him lounging in the window.

"And I hear them!" he added again, after a peal of thunder. "Here they come, fast, fierce, and furious!"

It was the rush and roar of rain that he typified, and it stopped him, for no voice could be heard in it. A memorable storm of thunder and lightning broke with that sweep of water, and there was not a moment's interval in crash, and fire, and rain, until after the moon rose at midnight.

The great bell of St. Paul's was striking One in the cleared air, when Mr. Lorry, escorted by Jerry, high-booted and bearing a lantern, set forth on his return-passage to Clerkenwell. There were solitary patches of road on the way between Soho and Clerkenwell, and Mr. Lorry, mindful of footpads, always retained Jerry for this service: though it was usually performed a good two hours earlier.

"What a night it has been! Almost a night, Jerry," said Mr. Lorry, "to bring the dead out of their graves."

"I never see the night myself, master—nor yet I don't expect to it—what would do that," answered Jerry.

"Good night, Mr. Carton," said the man of business. "Good night, Mr. Darnay. Shall we ever see such a night again, together!"

Perhaps. Perhaps, see the great crowd of people with its rush and roar, bearing down upon them, too.

CHAPTER VII.

Monseigneur in Town.

MONSEIGNEUR, one of the great lords in power at the Court, held his fortnightly reception in his grand hotel in Paris. Monseigneur was in his inner room, his sanctuary of sanctuaries, the Holiest of Holiests to the crowd of worshippers in the suite of rooms without. Monseigneur was about to take his chocolate. Monseigneur could swallow a great many things with ease, and was by some few sullen minds supposed to be rather rapidly swallowing France, but, his morning's chocolate could not so much as get into the throat of Monseigneur, without the aid of four strong men besides the Cook.

Yes. It took four men, all four a-blaze with gorgeous decoration, and the Chief of them unable to exist with fewer than two gold watches in his pocket, emulative of the noble and chaste fashion set by Monseigneur, to conduct the happy chocolate to Monseigneur's lips. One lacquey carried the chocolate-pot into the sacred presence; a second, milled and frothed the chocolate with the little instrument he bore for that function; a third,

presented the favoured napkin ; a fourth (he of the two gold watches) poured the chocolate out. It was impossible for Monseigneur to dispense with one of these attendants on the chocolate and hold his high place under the admiring Heavens. Deep would have been the blot upon his escutcheon if his chocolate had been ignobly waited on by only three men ; he must have died of two.

Monseigneur had been out at a little supper last night, where the Comedy and the Grand Opera were charmingly represented. Monseigneur was out at a little supper most nights, with fascinating company. So polite and so impressible was Monseigneur, that the Comedy and the Grand Opera had far more influence with him in the tiresome articles of state affairs and state secrets, than the needs of all France. A happy circumstance for France, as the like always is for all countries similarly favoured !—always was for England (by way of example), in the regretted days of the merry Stuart who sold it.

Monseigneur had one truly noble idea of general public business, which was, to let everything go on in its own way ; of particular public business, Monseigneur had the other truly noble idea that it must all go his way—tend to his own power and pocket. Of his pleasures, general and particular, Monseigneur had the other truly noble idea, that the world was made for them. The text of his order (altered from the original by only a pronoun, which is not much) ran : “The earth and the fulness thereof are mine, saith Monseigneur.”

Yet, Monseigneur had slowly found that vulgar embarrassments crept into his affairs, both private and public ; and he had, as to both classes of affairs, allied himself per force with a Farmer-General. As to finances public, because Monseigneur could not make anything at all of them, and must consequently let them out to somebody who could ; as to finances private, because Farmer-Generals were rich, and Monseigneur, after generations of great luxury and expense, was growing poor. Hence, Monseigneur had taken his sister from a convent, while there was yet time to ward off the impending veil, the cheapest garment she could wear, and had bestowed her as a prize upon a very rich Farmer-General, poor in family. Which Farmer-General, carrying an appropriate cane with a golden apple on the top of it, was now among the company in the outer rooms, much prostrated before by mankind—always excepting superior mankind of the blood of Monseigneur, who, his own wife included, looked down upon him with the loftiest contempt.

A sumptuous man was the Farmer-General. Thirty

horses stood in his stables, twenty-four male domestics sat in his halls, six body-women waited on his wife. As one who pretended to do nothing but plunder and forage where he could, the Farmer-General—howsoever his matrimonial relations conduced to social morality—was at least the greatest reality among the personages who attended at the hotel of Monseigneur that day.

For, the rooms, though a beautiful scene to look at, and adorned with every device of decoration that the taste and skill of the time could achieve, were, in truth, not a sound business; considered with any reference to the scarecrows in the rags and nightcaps elsewhere (and not so far off, either, but that the watching towers of Notre-Dame, almost equidistant from the two extremes, could see them both), they would have been an exceedingly uncomfortable business—if that could have been anybody's business, at the house of Monseigneur. Military officers destitute of military knowledge; naval officers with no idea of a ship; civil officers without a notion of affairs; brazen ecclesiastics, of the worst world worldly, with sensual eyes, loose tongues, and looser lives; all totally unfit for their several callings, all lying horribly in pretending to belong to them, but all nearly or remotely of the order of Monseigneur, and therefore foisted on all public employments from which anything was to be got; these were to be told off by the score and the score. People not immediately connected with Monseigneur or the State, yet equally unconnected with anything that was real, or with lives passed in travelling by any straight road to any true earthly end, were no less abundant. Doctors who made great fortunes out of dainty remedies for imaginary disorders that never existed, smiled upon their courtly patients in the ante-chambers of Monseigneur. Projectors who had discovered every kind of remedy for the little evils with which the State was touched, except the remedy of setting to work in earnest to root out a single sin, poured their distracting babble into any ears they could lay hold of, at the reception of Monseigneur. Unbelieving Philosophers, who were remodelling the world with words, and making card-towers of Babel to scale the skies with, talked with Unbelieving Chemists who had an eye on the transmutation of metals, at this wonderful gathering accumulated by Monseigneur. Exquisite gentlemen of the finest breeding, which was at that remarkable time—and has been since—to be known by its fruits of indifference to every natural subject of human interest, were in the most exemplary state of exhaustion, at the hotel of Monseigneur. Such homes had these various notabilities left behind them in the fine world of Paris, that the Spies among the assembled devotees of

Monseigneur—forming a goodly half of the polite company—would have found it hard to discover among the angels of that sphere one solitary wife, who, in her manners and appearance, owned to being a Mother. Indeed, except for the mere act of bringing a troublesome creature in this world—which does not go far towards the realisation of the name of mother—there was no such thing known to the fashion. Peasant women kept the unfashionable babies close, and brought them up; and charming grand-mammas of sixty dressed and supped as at twenty.

The leprosy of unreality disfigured every human creature in attendance upon Monseigneur. In the outermost room were half a dozen exceptional people who had had, for a few years, some vague misgiving in them that things in general were going rather wrong. As a promising way of setting them right, half of the half-dozen had become members of a fantastic sect of Convulsionists, and were even then considering within themselves whether they should foam, rage, roar, and turn cataleptic on the spot—thereby setting up a highly intelligible finger-post to the Future, for Monseigneur's guidance. Besides these Dervishes, were other three who had rushed into another sect, which mended matters with a jargon about "the Centre of truth:" holding that Man had got out of the Centre of truth—which did not need much demonstration—but had not got out of the Circumference, and that he was to be kept from flying out of the Circumference, and was even to be shoved back into the Centre, by fasting and seeing of spirits. Among these, accordingly, much discoursing with spirits went on—and it did a world of good which never became manifest.

But, the comfort was, that all the company at the grand hotel of Monseigneur were perfectly dressed. If the Day of Judgment had only been ascertained to be a dress day, everybody there would have been eternally correct. Such frizzling and powdering and sticking up of hair, such delicate complexions artificially preserved and mended, such gallant swords to look at, and such delicate honour to the sense of smell, would surely keep anything going, for ever and ever. The exquisite gentlemen of the finest breeding wore little pendent trinkets that chinked as they languidly moved; these golden fetters rang like precious little bells; and what with that ringing, and with the rustle of silk and brocade and fine linen, there was a flutter in the air that fanned Saint Antoine and his devouring hunger far away.

Dress was the one unfailing talisman and charm used for keeping all things in their places. Everybody was dressed for a Fancy Ball that was never to leave off.

From the Palace of Tuileries, through Monseigneur and the whole Court, though the Chambers, the Tribunals of Justice, and all society (except the scarecrows), the Fancy Ball descended to the Common Executioner : who, in pursuance of the charm, was required to officiate "frizzled, powdered, in a gold-laced coat, pumps, and white silk stockings." At the gallows and the wheel—the axe was a rarity—Monsieur Paris, as it was the episcopal mode among his brother Professors of the provinces, Monsieur Orleans, and the rest, to call him, presided in this dainty dress. And who among the company at Monseigneur's reception in that seventeen hundred and eightieth year of our Lord, could possibly doubt, that a system rooted in a frizzled hangman, powdered, gold-laced, pumped, and white-silk stockinged, would see the very stars out !

Monseigneur having eased his four men of their burdens and taken his chocolate, caused the doors of the Holiest of Holiests to be thrown open, and issued forth. Then, what submission, what cringing and fawning, what servility, what abject humiliation ! As to bowing down in body and spirit, nothing in that way was left for Heaven—which may have been one among other reasons why the worshippers of Monseigneur never troubled it.

Bestowing a word of promise here, and a smile there, a whisper on one heavy slave and a wave of the hand on another, Monseigneur affably passed through his rooms to the remote region of the Circumference of Truth. There, Monseigneur turned, and came back again, and so in due course of time got himself shut up in his sanctuary by the chocolate sprites, and was seen no more.

The show being over, the flutter in the air became quite a little storm, and the precious little bells went ringing down-stairs. There was soon but one person left of all the crowd, and he, with his hat under his arm and his snuff-box in his hand, slowly passed among the mirrors on his way out.

"I devote you," said this person, stopping at the last door on his way, and turning in the direction of the sanctuary, "to the Devil !"

With that, he shook the snuff from his fingers as if he had shaken the dust from his feet, and quietly walked down-stairs.

He was a man of about sixty, handsomely dressed, haughty in manner, and with a face like a fine mask. A face of a transparent paleness ; every feature in it clearly defined ; one set expression on it. The nose, beautifully formed otherwise, was very slightly pinched at the top of each nostril. In those two compressions, or dints, the

only little change that the face ever showed, resided. They persisted in changing colour sometimes, and they would be occasionally dilated and contracted by something like a faint pulsation ; then, they gave a look of treachery, and cruelty, to the whole countenance. Examined with attention, its capacity of helping such a look was to be found in the line of the mouth, and the lines of the orbits of the eyes, being much too horizontal and thin ; still, in the effect the face made, it was a handsome face, and a remarkable one.

Its owner went down-stairs into the court-yard, got into his carriage, and drove away. Not many people had talked with him at the reception ; he had stood in a little space apart, and Monseigneur might have been warmer in his manner. It appeared, under the circumstances, rather agreeable to him to see the common-people dispersed before his horses, and often barely escaping from being run down. His man drove as if he were charging an enemy, and the furious recklessness of the man brought no check into the face, or to the lips, of the master. The complaint had sometimes made itself audible, even in that deaf city and dumb age, that, in the narrow streets without footways, the fierce patrician custom of hard driving endangered and maimed the mere vulgar in a barbarous manner. But, few cared enough for that to think of it a second time, and in this matter, as in all others, the common wretches were left to get out of their difficulties as they could.

With a wild rattle and chatter, and an inhuman abandonment of consideration not easy to be understood in these days, the carriage dashed through streets and swept round corners, with women screaming before it, and men clutching each other and clutching children out of its way. At last, swooping at a street corner by a fountain, one of its wheels came to a sickening little jolt, and there was a loud cry from a number of voices, and the horses reared and plunged.

But for the latter inconvenience, the carriage probably would not have stopped ; carriages were often known to drive on, and leave their wounded behind, and why not ? But, the frightened valet had got down in a hurry, and there were twenty hands at the horses' bridles.

"What has gone wrong?" said Monsieur, calmly looking out.

A tall man in a nightcap had caught up a bundle from among the feet of the horses, and had laid it on the basement of the fountain, and was down in the mud and wet, howling over it like a wild animal.

"Pardon, Monsieur the Marquis !" said a ragged and submissive man, "it is a child."

“Why does he make that abominable noise? Is it his child?”

“Excuse me, Monsieur the Marquis—it is a pity—yes.”

The fountain was a little removed; for the street opened, where it was, into a space some ten or twelve yards square. As the tall man suddenly got up from the ground, and came running at the carriage, Monsieur the Marquis clapped his hands for an instant on his sword-hilt.

“Killed!” shrieked the man, in wild desperation, extending both arms at their length above his head, and staring at him. “Dead!”

The people closed round, and looked at Monsieur the Marquis. There was nothing revealed by the many eyes that looked at him but watchfulness and eagerness; there was no visible menacing or anger. Neither did the people say anything; after the first cry, they had been silent, and they remained so. The voice of the submissive man who had spoken, was flat and tame in its extreme submission. Monsieur the Marquis ran his eyes over them all, as if they had been mere rats come out of their holes.

He took out his purse.

“It is extraordinary to me,” said he, “that you people cannot take care of yourselves and your children. One or the other of you is for ever in the way. How do I know what injury you have done my horses. See! Give him that.”

He threw out a gold coin for the valet to pick up, and all the heads craned forward that all the eyes might look down at it as it fell. The tall man called out again with a most unearthly cry, “Dead!”

He was arrested by the quick arrival of another man, for whom the rest made way. On seeing him, the miserable creature fell upon his shoulder, sobbing and crying, and pointing to the fountain, where some women were stooping over the motionless bundle, and moving gently about it. They were as silent, however, as the men.

“I know all, I know all,” said the last comer. “Be a brave man, my Gaspard! It is better for the poor little plaything to die so, than to live. It has died in a moment without pain. Could it have lived an hour as happily?”

“You are a philosopher, you there,” said the Marquis, smiling. “How do they call you?”

“They call me Defarge.”

“Of what trade?”

“Monsieur the Marquis, vendor of wine.”

“Pick up that, philosopher and vendor of wine,” said

the Marquis, throwing him another gold coin, "and spend it as you will. The horses there; are they right?"

Without deigning to look at the assemblage a second time, Monsieur the Marquis leaned back in his seat, and was just being driven away with the air of a gentleman who had accidentally broken some common thing, and had paid for it, and could afford to pay for it; when his ease was suddenly disturbed by a coin flying into his carriage, and ringing on its floor.

"Hold!" said Monsieur the Marquis. "Hold the horses! Who threw that?"

He looked to the spot where Defarge the vendor of wine had stood a moment before; but the wretched father was grovelling on his face on the pavement in that spot, and the figure that stood beside him was the figure of a dark and stout woman, knitting.

"You dogs!" said the Marquis, but smoothly, and with an unchanged front, except as to the spots on his nose: "I would ride over any of you very willingly, and exterminate you from the earth. If I knew which rascal threw at the carriage, and if that brigand were sufficiently near it, he should be crushed under the wheels."

So cowed was their condition, and so long and hard their experience of what such a man could do to them, within the law and beyond it, that not a voice, or a hand, or even an eye was raised. Among the men, not one. But the women who stood knitting looked up steadily, and looked the Marquis in the face. It was not for his dignity to notice it; his contemptuous eyes passed over her, and over all the other rats; and he leaned back in his seat again, and gave the word "Go on!"

He was driven on, and other carriages came whirling by in quick succession; the Minister, the State-Projector, the Farmer-General, the Doctor, the Lawyer, the Ecclesiastic, the Grand Opera, the Comedy, the whole Fancy Ball, in a bright continuous flow, came whirling by. The rats had crept out of their holes to look on, and they remained looking on for hours; soldiers and police often passing between them and the spectacle, and making a barrier behind which they slunk, and through which they peeped. The father had long ago taken up his bundle and hidden himself away with it, when the woman who had tended the bundle while it lay on the base of the fountain, sat there watching the running of the water, and the rolling of the Fancy Ball—when the one woman who had stood conspicuous, knitting, still knitted on with the steadfastness of Fate. The water of the fountain ran, the swift river ran, the day ran into evening, so much life in the city ran into death according to rule, time and tide waited for no man, the rats were

sleeping close together in their dark holes again, the Fancy Ball was lighted up at supper, all things ran their course.

CHAPTER VIII.

Monseigneur in the Country.

A BEAUTIFUL landscape, with the corn bright in it but not abundant. Patches of poor rye where corn should have been, patches of poor peas and beans, patches of most coarse vegetable substitutes for wheat. On inanimate nature, as on the men and women who cultivated it, a prevalent tendency towards an appearance of vegetating unwillingly—a dejected disposition to give up and wither away.

Monsieur the Marquis in his travelling carriage (which might have been lighter), conducted by four post-horses and two postilions, fagged up a steep hill. A blush on the countenance of Monsieur the Marquis was no impeachment of his high breeding; it was not from within; it was occasioned by an external circumstance beyond his control—the setting sun.

The sunset struck so brilliantly into the travelling carriage when it gained the hill-top, that its occupant was steeped in crimson. “It will die out,” said Monsieur the Marquis, glancing at his hands, “directly.”

In effect, the sun was so low that it dipped at the moment. When the heavy drag had been adjusted to the wheel, and the carriage slid down hill, with a cinderous smell, in a cloud of dust, the red glow departed quickly; the sun and the Marquis going down together, there was no glow left when the drag was taken off.

But, there remained a broken country, bold and open, a little village at the bottom of the hill, a broad sweep and rise beyond it, a church-tower, a wind-mill, a forest for the chase, and a crag with a fortress on it used as a prison. Round upon all these darkening objects as the night drew on, the Marquis looked, with the air of one who was coming near home.

The village had its one poor street, with its poor brewery, poor tannery, poor tavern, poor stable-yard for relays of post-horses, poor fountain, all usual poor appointments. It had its poor people too. All its people were poor, and many of them were sitting at their doors, shredding spare onions and the like for supper, while many were at the fountain, washing leaves, and grasses, and any such small yieldings of the earth that could be eaten. Expressive signs of what made them poor, were not wanting; the tax for the state, the tax for the

church, the tax for the lord, tax local and tax general, were to be paid here and to be paid there, according to solemn inscription in the little village, until the wonder was, that there was any village left unswallowed.

Few children were to be seen, and no dogs. As to the men and women, their choice on earth was stated in the prospect—Life on the lowest terms that could sustain it, down in the little village under the mill; or captivity and Death in the dominant prison on the crag.

Heralded by a courier in advance, and by the cracking of his postilions' whips, which twined snake-like about their heads in the evening air, as if he came attended by the Furies, Monsieur the Marquis drew up in his travelling carriage at the posting-house gate. It was hard by the fountain, and the peasants suspended their operations to look at him. He looked at them, and saw in them, without knowing it, the slow sure filing down of misery-worn face and figure, that was to make the meagreness of Frenchmen an English superstition which should survive the truth through the best part of a hundred years.

Monsieur the Marquis cast his eyes over the submissive faces that drooped before him, as the like of himself had drooped before Monseigneur of the Court—only the difference was, that these faces drooped merely to suffer and not to propitiate—when a grizzled mender of the roads joined the group.

“Bring me hither that fellow!” said the Marquis to the courier.

The fellow was brought, cap in hand, and the other fellows closed round to look and listen, in the manner of the people at the Paris fountain.

“I passed you on the road?”

“Monseigneur, it is true. I had the honour of being passed the road.

“Coming up the hill, and at the top of the hill, both?”

“Monseigneur, it is true.”

“What did you look at, so fixedly?”

“Monseigneur, I looked at the man.”

He stooped a little, and with his tattered blue cap pointed under the carriage. All his fellows stooped to look under the carriage.

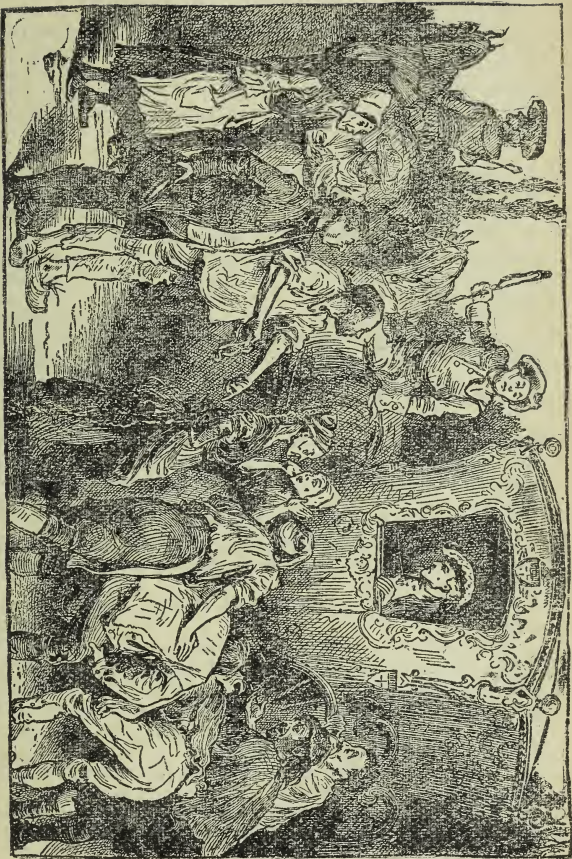
“What man, pig? And why look there?”

“Pardon, Monseigneur; he swung by the chain of the shoe—the drag.”

“Who?” demanded the traveller.

“Monseigneur, the man.”

“May the Devil carry away these idiots! How do you call the man? You know all the men of this part of the country. Who was he?”



HE STOOPED A LITTLE, AND WITH HIS TATTERED BLUE CAP POINTED UNDER THE CARRIAGE.

—A Tale of Two Cities, Vol. Eleven, page 101.

"Your clemency, Monsiegnour ! He was not of this part of the country. Of all the days of my life, I never saw him."

"Swinging by the chain ? To be suffocated ?"

"With your gracious permission, that was the wonder of it, Monseigneur. His head hanging over—like this !"

He turned himself sideways to the carriage, and leaned back, with his face thrown up to the sky, and his head hanging down ; then recovered himself, fumbled with his cap, and made a bow.

"What was he like ?"

"Monseigneur, he was whiter than the miller. All covered with dust, white as a spectre, tall as a spectre !"

The picture produced an immense sensation in the little crowd : but all eyes, without comparing notes with other eyes, looked at Monsieur the Marquis. Perhaps, to observe whether he had any spectre on his conscience.

"Truly, you did well," said the Marquis, felicitously sensible that such vermin were not to ruffle him, "to see a thief accompanying my carriage, and not open that great mouth of yours. Bah ! Put him aside, Monsieur Gabelle !"

Monsieur Gabelle was the postmaster, and some other taxing functionary, united ; he had come out with great obsequiousness to assist at this examination, and had held the examined by the drapery of his arm in an official manner.

"Bah ! Go aside !" said Monsieur Gabelle.

"Lay hands on this stranger if he seeks to lodge in your village to-night, and be sure that his business is honest, Gabelle."

"Monseigneur, I am flattered to devote myself to your orders."

"Did he run away, fellow ?—where is that Accursed ?"

The accursed was already under the carriage with some half-dozen particular friends, pointing out the chain with his blue cap. Some half-dozen other particular friends promptly haled him out, and presented him breathless to Monsieur the Marquis.

"Did the man run away, Dolt, when we stopped for the drag ?"

"Monseigneur, he precipitated himself over the hill-side, head first, as a person plunges into the river."

"See to it, Gabelle. Go on !"

The half-dozen who were peering at the chain were still among the wheels, like sheep ; the wheels turned so suddenly that they were lucky to save their skins and bones ; they had very little else to save, or they might not have been so fortunate.

The burst with which the carriage started out of the

village and up the rise beyond, was soon checked by the steepness of the hill. Gradually, it subsided to a foot pace, swinging and lumbering upward among the many sweet scents of a summer night. The postilions, with a thousand gossamer gnats circling about them in lieu of the Furies, quietly mended the points to the lashes of their whips; the valet walked by the horses; the courier was audible, trotting on ahead into the dim distance.

At the steepest point of the hill there was a little burial-ground, with a Cross and a new large figure of Our Saviour on it; it was a poor figure in wood, done by some inexperienced rustic carver, but he had studied the figure from the life—his own life, maybe—for it was dreadfully spare and thin.

To this distressful emblem of a great distress that had long been growing worse, and was not at its worst, a woman was kneeling. She turned her head as the carriage came up to her, rose quickly, and presented herself at the carriage-door.

“It is you, Monseigneur! Monseigneur a petition.”

With an exclamation of impatience, but with his unchangeable face, Monseigneur looked out.

“How, then! What is it? Always petitions!”

“Monseigneur. For the love of the great God! My husband, the forester.”

“What of your husband, the forester? Always the same with you people. He cannot pay something!”

“He has paid all, Monseigneur. He is dead.”

“Well! He is quiet. Can I restore him to you?”

“Alas no, Monseigneur! But he lies yonder, under a little heap of poor grass.”

“Well?”

“Monseigneur, there are so many little heaps of poor grass!”

“Again, well?”

She looked an old woman, but was young. Her manner was one of passionate grief; by turns she clasped her veinous and knotted hands together with wild energy, and laid one of them on the carriage-door—tenderly, caressingly, as if it had been a human breast, and could be expected to feel the appealing touch.

“Monseigneur, hear me! Monseigneur hear my petition! My husband died of want; so many die of want; so many more will die of want.”

“Again, well? Can I feed them?”

“Monseigneur, the good God knows; but I don’t ask it. My petition is, that a morsel of stone or wood, with my husband’s name, may be placed over him to show where he lies. Otherwise, the place will be quickly forgotten, it will never be found when I am dead of the same malady, I shall be laid under some other heap of

poor grass. Monseigneur, they are so many, they increase so fast, there is so much want. Monseigneur! Monseigneur!"

The valet had put her away from the door, the carriage had broken into a brisk trot, the postilions had quickened the pace, she was left far behind, and Monseigneur, again escorted by the Furies, was rapidly diminishing the league or two of distance that remained between him and his château.

The sweet scents of the summer night rose all around him, and rose, as the rain falls, impartially, on the dusty, ragged, and toil-worn group at the fountain not far away; to whom the mender of roads, with the aid of the blue cap without which he was nothing, still enlarged upon his man like a spectre, as long as they could bear it. By degrees, as they could bear no more, they dropped off one by one, and lights twinkled in little casements; which lights, as the casements darkened, and more stars came out, seemed to have shot up into the sky instead of having been extinguished.

The shadow of a large high-roofed house, and of many overhanging trees, was upon Monsieur the Marquis by that time; and the shadow was exchanged for the light of a flambeau, as his carriage stopped, and the great door of his château was opened to him.

"Monsieur Charles, whom I expect; is he arrived from England?"

"Monseigneur, not yet."

CHAPTER IX.

The Gorgon's Head.

It was a heavy mass of building, that château of Monsieur the Marquis, with a large stone court-yard before it, and two stone sweeps of staircase meeting in a stone terrace before the principal door. A stony business altogether, with heavy stone balustrades, and stone urns, and stone flowers, and stone faces of men, and stone heads of lions, in all directions. . As if the Gorgon's head had surveyed it, when it was finished, two centuries ago.

Up the broad flight of shallow steps, Monsieur the Marquis, flambeau preceded, went from his carriage, sufficiently disturbing the darkness to elicit loud remonstrance from an owl in the roof of the great pile of stable-building away among the trees. All else was so quiet, that the flambeau carried up the steps, and the other flambeau held at the great door, burnt as if they

were in a close room of state, instead of being in the open night air. Other sound than the owl's voice there was none, save the falling of a fountain into a stone basin; for, it was one those dark nights that hold their breath by the hour together, and then heave a long low sigh, and hold their breath again.

The great door clanged behind him, and Monsieur the Marquis crossed a hall grim with certain old boar-spears, swords, and knives of the chase; grimmer with certain heavy riding-rods and riding whips, of which many a peasant, gone to his benefactor Death, had felt the weight when his lord was angry.

Avoiding the larger rooms, which were dark and made fast for the night, Monsieur the Marquis, with his flambeau-bearer going on before, went up the staircase to a door in a corridor. This thrown open admitted him to his own private apartment of three rooms; his bed-chamber and two others. High vaulted rooms with cool uncarpeted floors, great dogs upon the hearths for the burning of wood in winter time, and all luxuries befitting the state of a marquis in a luxurious age and country. The fashion of the last Louis but one, of the line that was never to break—the fourteenth Louis—was conspicuous in their rich furniture; but it was diversified by many objects that were illustrations of old pages in the history of France.

A supper-table was laid for two, in the third of the rooms; a round room, in one of the château's four extinguisher-topped towers. A small lofty room, with its window wide open, and the wooden jalousie-blinds closed, so that the dark night only showed in slight horizontal lines of black, alternating with their broad lines of stone colour.

"My nephew," said the Marquis, glancing at the supper preparation; "they said he was not arrived."

Nor was he; but, he had been expected with Monseigneur.

"Ah! It is not probable he will arrive to-night; nevertheless, leave the table as it is. I shall be ready in a quarter of an hour."

In a quarter of an hour, Monseigneur was ready, and sat down alone to his sumptuous and choice supper. His chair was opposite to the window, and he had taken his soup, and was raising his glass of Bordeaux to his lips, when he put it down.

"What is that?" he calmly asked, looking with attention at the horizontal lines of black and stone colour.

"Monseigneur? That?"

"Outside the blinds. Open the blinds."

It was done.

"Well?"

“Monseigneur, it is nothing. The trees and the night are all that are here.”

The servant who spoke, had thrown the blinds wide, had looked out into the vacant darkness, and stood, with that blank behind him, looking round for instructions.

“Good,” said the imperturbable master. “Close them again.”

That was done too, and the Marquis went on with his supper. He was half way through it, when he again stopped with his glass in his hand, hearing the sound of wheels. It came on briskly, and came up to the front of the château.

“Ask who is arrived.”

It was the nephew of Monseigneur. He had been some few leagues behind Monseigneur, early in the afternoon. He had diminished the distance rapidly, but not so rapidly as to come up with Monseigneur on the road. He had heard of Monseigneur, at the posting-houses, as being before him.

He was to be told (said Monseigneur) that supper awaited him then and there, and that he was prayed to come to it. In a little while, he came. He had been known in England as Charles Darnay.

Monseigneur received him in a courtly manner, but they did not shake hands.

“You left Paris yesterday, sir?” he said to Monseigneur, as he took his seat at table.

“Yesterday. And you?”

“I come direct.”

“From London?”

“Yes.”

“You have been a long time coming,” said the Marquis, with a smile.

“On the contrary; I come direct.”

“Pardon me! I mean, not a long time on the journey; a long time intending the journey.”

“I have been detained by”—the nephew stopped a moment in his answer—“various business.”

“Without doubt,” said the polished uncle.

So long as a servant was present, no other words passed between them. When coffee had been served and they were alone together, the nephew, looking at the uncle and meeting the eyes of the face that was like a fine mask, opened a conversation.

“I have come back, sir, as you anticipate, pursuing the object that took me away. It carried me into great and unexpected peril; but it is a sacred object, and if it had carried me to death I hope it would have sustained me.”

“Not to death,” said the uncle; “it is not necessary to say, to death.”

"I doubt, sir," returned the nephew, "whether, if it had carried me to the utmost brink of death, you would have cared to stop me there."

The deepened marks in the nose, and the lengthening of the fine straight lines in the cruel face, looked ominous as to that; the uncle made a graceful gesture of protest, which was so clearly a slight form of good breeding that it was not reassuring.

"Indeed, sir," pursued the nephew, "for anything I know, you may have expressly worked to give a more suspicious appearance to the suspicious circumstances that surrounded me."

"No, no, no," said the uncle, pleasantly.

"But however that may be," resumed the nephew, glancing at him with deep distrust, "I know that your diplomacy would stop me by any means, and would know no scruple as to means."

"My friend, I told you so," said the uncle, with a fine pulsation in the two marks. "Do me the favour to recal that I told you so, long ago."

"I recal it."

"Thank you," said the Marquis—very sweetly indeed.

His tone lingered in the air, almost like the tone of a musical instrument.

"In effect, sir," pursued the nephew, "I believe it to be at once your bad fortune, and my good fortune, that has kept me out of a prison in France here."

"I do not understand," returned the uncle, sipping his coffee. "Dare I ask you to explain?"

"I believe that if you were not in disgrace with the court, and had not been overshadowed by that cloud for years past, a letter *de cachet* would have sent me to some fortress indefinitely."

"It is possible," said the uncle with great calmness. "For the honour of the family, I could even resolve to incommode you to that extent. Pray excuse me!"

"I perceive that, happily for me, the Reception of the day before yesterday was, as usual, a cold one," observed the nephew.

"I would not say happily, my friend," returned the uncle, with refined politeness; "I would not be sure of that. A good opportunity for consideration, surrounded by the advantages of solitude, might influence your destiny to far greater advantage than you influence it for yourself. But it is useless to discuss the question. I am, as you say, at a disadvantage. These little instruments of correction, these gentle aids to the power and honour of families, these slight favours that might so incommode you, are only to be obtained now by interest

and importunity. They are sought by so many, and they are granted (comparatively) to so few ! It used not to be so, but France in all such things is changed for the worse. Our not remote ancestors held the right of life and death over the surrounding vulgar. From this room, many such dogs have been taken out to be hanged ; in the next room (my bedroom), one fellow, to our knowledge, was poniarded on the spot for professing some insolent delicacy respecting his daughter—*his* daughter ! We have lost many privileges ; a new philosophy has become the mode ; and the assertion of our station, in these days, might (I do not go so far as to say would, but might) cause us real inconvenience. All very bad, very bad ! ”

The Marquis took a gentle little pinch of snuff, and shook his head ; as elegantly despondent as he could becomingly be, of a country still containing himself, that great means of regeneration.

“ We have so asserted our station, both in the old time and in the modern time also,” said the nephew, gloomily, “ that I believe our name to be more detested than any name in France.”

“ Let us hope so,” said the uncle. “ Detestation of the high is the involuntary homage of the low.”

“ There is not,” pursued the nephew, in his former tone, “ a face I can look at, in all this country round about us, which looks at me with any deference on it but the dark deference of fear and slavery.”

“ A compliment,” said the Marquis, “ to the grandeur of the family, merited by the manner in which the family has sustained its grandeur. Hah ! ” and he took another gentle little pinch of snuff, and lightly crossed his legs.

But, when his nephew, leaning an elbow on the table, covered his eyes thoughtfully and dejectedly with his hand, the fine mask looked at him sideways with a stronger concentration of keenness, closeness, and dislike, than was comfortable with its wearer’s assumption of indifference.

“ Repression is the only lasting philosophy. The dark deference of fear and slavery, my friend,” observed the Marquis, “ will keep the dogs obedient to the whip, as long as this roof,” looking up to it, “ shuts out the sky.”

That might not be so long as the Marquis supposed. If a picture of the chateau as it was to be a very few years hence, and of fifty like it as they too were to be a very few years hence, could have been shown to him that night, he might have been at a loss to claim his own from the ghastly, fire-charred, plunder-wrecked ruins. As for the roof he vaunted, he might have found *that* shutting

out the sky in a new way—to wit, forever, from the eyes of the bodies into which its lead was fired, out of the barrels of a hundred thousand muskets.

“Meanwhile,” said the Marquis, “I will preserve the honour and repose of the family, if you will not. But you must be fatigued. Shall we terminate our conference for the night?”

“A moment more.”

“An hour, if you please.”

“Sir,” said the nephew, “we have done wrong, and are reaping the fruits of wrong.”

“*We* have done wrong?” repeated the Marquis, with an inquiring smile, and delicately pointing, first to his nephew, then to himself.

“Our family; our honourable family, whose honour is of so much account to both of us, in such different ways. Even in my father’s time, we did a world of wrong, injuring every human creature that came between us and our pleasure, whatever it was. Why need I speak of my father’s time, when it is equally yours? Can I separate my father’s twin-brother, joint inheritor, and next successor, from himself?”

“Death has done that!” said the Marquis.

“And has left me,” answered the nephew, “bound to a system that is frightful to me, responsible for it, but powerless in it; seeking to execute the last request of my dear mother’s lips, and obey the last look of my dear mother’s eyes, which implored me to have mercy and to redress; and tortured by seeking assistance and power in vain.”

“Seeking them from me, my nephew,” said the Marquis, touching him on the breast with his forefinger—they were now standing by the hearth—“you will forever seek them in vain, be assured.”

Every fine straight line in the clear whiteness of his face, was cruelly, craftily, and closely compressed, while he stood looking quietly at his nephew, with his snuff-box in his hand. Once again he touched him on the breast, as though his finger were the fine point of a small sword, with which, in delicate finesse, he ran him through the body, and said,

“My friend, I will die, perpetuating the system under which I have lived.”

When he had said it, he took a culminating pinch of snuff, and put his box in his pocket.

“Better to be a rational creature,” he added, then, after ringing a small bell on the table, “and accept your natural destiny. But you are lost, Monsieur Charles, I see.”

“This property and France are lost to me,” said the nephew, sadly; “I renounce them.”

“Are they both yours to renounce? France may be,

but is the property? It is scarcely worth mentioning; but, is it yet?"

"I had no intention, in the words I used, to claim it yet. If it passed to me from you, to-morrow—"

"Which I have the vanity to hope is not probable."

"—or twenty years hence—"

"You do me too much honour," said the Marquis, "still, I prefer that supposition."

"—I would abandon it, and live otherwise and elsewhere. It is little to relinquish. What is it but a wilderness of misery and ruin?"

"Hah!" said the Marquis, glancing round the luxurious room.

"To the eye it is fair enough, here; but seen in its integrity, under the sky, and by the daylight, it is a crumbling tower of waste, mismanagement, extortion, debt, mortgage, oppression, hunger, nakedness, and suffering."

"Hah!" said the Marquis again, in a well-satisfied manner.

"If it ever becomes mine, it shall be put into some hands better qualified to free it slowly (if such a thing is possible) from the weight that drags it down, so that the miserable people who cannot leave it and who have been long wrung to the last point of endurance, may, in another generation, suffer less; but it is not for me. There is a curse on it, and on all this land."

"And you?" said the uncle. "Forgive my curiosity; do you, under your new philosophy, graciously intend to live?"

"I must do, to live, what others of my countrymen, even with nobility at their backs, may have to do some day—work."

"In England, for example?"

"Yes. The family honour, sir, is safe for me in this country. The family name can suffer from me in no other, for I bear it in no other."

The ringing of the bell had caused the adjoining bed-chamber to be lighted. It now shone brightly, through the door of communication. The Marquis looked that way, and listened for the retreating step of his valet.

"England is very attractive to you, seeing how indifferently you have prospered there," he observed then, turning his calm face to his nephew with a smile.

"I have already said, that for my prospering there I am sensible I may indebted to you, sir. For the rest, it is my Refuge."

"They say, those boastful English, that it is the Refuge of many. You know a compatriot who has found a Refuge there? A Doctor?"

“Yes.”

“With a daughter?”

“Yes.”

“Yes,” said the Marquis. “You are fatigued. Good night?”

As he bent his head in his most courtly manner, there was a secrecy in his smiling face, and he conveyed an air of mystery to those words, which struck the eyes and ears of his nephew forcibly. At the same time, the thin straight lines of the setting of the eyes and the thin straight lips, and the markings in the nose, curved with a sarcasm that looked handsomely diabolic.

“Yes,” repeated the Marquis. “A Doctor with a daughter. Yes. So commences the new philosophy! You are fatigued. Good night!”

It would have been of as much avail to interrogate any stone face outside the château as to interrogate that face of his. The nephew looked at him, in vain, in passing on to the door.

“Good night!” said the uncle. “I look to the pleasure of seeing you again in the morning. Good repose! Light Monsieur my nephew to his chamber there!—And burn Monsieur my nephew in his bed, if you will,” he added to himself, before he rang his little bell again, and summoned his valet to his own bedroom.

The valet come and gone, Monsieur the Marquis walked to and fro in his loose chamber-robe, to prepare himself gently for sleep, that hot still night. Rustling about the room, his softly-slippered feet making no noise on the floor, he moved like a refined tiger:—looked like some enchanted marquis of the impenitently wicked sort, in story, whose periodical change into tiger form was either just going off, or just coming on.

He moved from end to end of his voluptuous bedroom, looking again at the scraps of the day’s journey that came unbidden into his mind; the slow toil up the hill at sunset, the setting sun, the descent, the mill, the prison on the crag, the little village in the hollow, the peasants at the fountain, and the mender of roads with his blue cap pointing out the chain under the carriage. That fountain suggested the Paris fountain, the little bundle lying on the step, the women bending over it, and the tall man with his arms up, crying, “Dead!”

“I am cool now,” said Monsieur the Marquis, “and may go to bed.”

So, leaving only one light burning on the large hearth, he let his thin gauze curtains fall around him, and heard the night break its silence with a long sigh as he composed himself to sleep.

The stone faces on the outer walls stared blindly at the black night for three heavy hours; for three heavy

hours, the horses in the stables rattled at their racks, the dogs barked, and the owl made a noise with very little resemblance in it to the noise conventionally assigned to the owl by men-poets. But, it is the obstinate custom of such creatures hardly ever to say what is set down for them.

For three heavy hours, the stone faces of the château, lion and human, stared blindly at the night. Dead darkness lay on all the landscape, dead darkness added its own hush to the hushing dust on all the roads. The burial-place has got to the pass that its little heaps of poor grass were undistinguishable from one another; the figure on the Cross might have come down, for anything that could be seen of it. In the village, taxers and taxed were fast asleep. Dreaming, perhaps, of banquets, as the starved usually do, and of ease and rest, as the driven slave and the yoked ox may, its lean inhabitants slept soundly, and were fed and freed.

The fountain in the village flowed unseen and unheard, and the fountain at the château dropped unseen and unheard—both melting away, like the minutes that were falling from the spring of Time—through three dark hours. Then, the grey water of both began to be ghostly in the light, and the eyes of the stone faces of the château were opened.

Lighter and lighter, until at last the sun touched the tops of the still trees, and poured its radiance over the hill. In the glow, the water of the château fountain seemed to turn to blood, and the stone faces crimsoned. The carol of the birds was loud and high, and, on the weather-beaten sill of the great window of the bed-chamber of Monsieur the Marquis, one little bird sang its sweetest song with all its might. At this, the nearest stone face seemed to stare amazed, and, with open mouth and dropped under-jaw, looked awe-stricken.

Now, the sun was full up, and movement began in the village. Casement windows opened, crazy doors were unbarred, and people came forth shivering—chilled, as yet, by the new sweet air. Then began the rarely lightened toil of the day among the village population. Some, to the fountain; some, to the fields; men and women here, to dig and delve; men and women there, to see to the poor live stock, and lead the bony cows out, to such pasture as could be found by the roadside. In the church and at the Cross, a kneeling figure or two attendant on the latter prayers, the led cow, trying for a breakfast among the weeds at its foot.

The château awoke later, as became its quality, but awoke gradually and surely. First, the lonely boar spears and knives of the chase had been reddened as of old; then, had gleamed trenchant in the morning sun.

shine ; now, doors and windows were thrown open, horses in their stables looked round over their shoulders at the light and freshness pouring in at doorways, leaves sparkled and rustled at iron-grated windows, dogs pulled hard at their chains, and reared impatient to be loosed.

All these trivial incidents belonged to the routine of life, and the return of morning. Surely, not so the ringing of the great bell of the *château*, nor the running up and down the stairs, nor the hurried figures on the terrace, nor the booting and tramping here and there and everywhere, nor the quick saddling of horses and riding away ?

What winds conveyed this hurry to the grizzled mender of roads, already at work on the hill-top beyond the village, with his day's dinner (not much to carry) lying in a bundle that it was worth no crow's while to peck at, on a heap of stones ? Had the birds, carrying some grains of it to a distance, dropped one over him as they sow chance seeds ? Whether or no, the mender of roads ran, on the sultry morning, as if for his life, down the hill, knee-high in dust, and never stopped till he got to the fountain.

All the people of the village were at the fountain, standing about in their depressed manner, and whispering low, but showing no other emotions than grim curiosity and surprise. The led cows, hastily brought in and tethered to anything that would hold them, were looking stupidly on, or lying down chewing the cud of nothing particularly repaying their trouble, which they had picked up in their interrupted saunter. Some of the people of the *château*, and some of those of the posting-house, and all the taxing authorities, were armed more or less, and were crowded on the other side of the little street in a purposeless way, that was highly fraught with nothing. Already, the mender of roads had penetrated into the midst of a group of fifty particular friends, and was smiting himself in the breast with his blue cap. What did all this portend, and what portended the swift hoisting up of Monsieur Gabelle behind a servant on horseback, and the conveying away of the said Gabelle (double-laden though the horse was), at a gallop, like a new version of the German ballad of Leonora ?

It portended that there was one stone face too many, up at the *château*.

The Gorgon had surveyed the building again in the night, and had added the one stone face wanting ; the stone face for which it had waited through about two hundred years.

It lay back on the pillow of Monsieur the Marquis. It was like a fine mask, suddenly startled, made angry, and petrified. Driven home into the heart of the stone

figure attached to it, was a knife. Round its hilt was a frill of paper, on which was scrawled :

“*Drive him fast to his tomb. This, from JAQUES.*”

CHAPTER X.

Two Promises.

MORE months to the number of twelve, had come and gone, and Mr. Charles Darnay was established in England as a higher teacher of the French language who was conversant with French literature. In this age, he would have been a Professor ; in that age, he was a Tutor. He read with young men who could find any leisure and interest for the study of a living tongue spoken all over the world, and he cultivated a taste for its stores of knowledge and fancy. He could write of them, besides, in sound English, and render them into sound English. Such masters were not at that time easily found ; Princes that had been, and Kings that were to be, were not yet of the Teacher class, and no ruined nobility had dropped out of Tellson’s ledgers, to turn cooks and carpenters. As a tutor, whose attainments made the student’s way unusually pleasant and profitable, and as an elegant translator who brought something to his work besides mere dictionary knowledge, young Mr. Darnay soon became known and encouraged. He was well acquainted, moreover, with the circumstances of his country, and those were of ever-growing interest. So, with great perseverance and untiring industry, he prospered.

In London, he had expected neither to walk on pavements of gold, nor to lie on beds of roses ; if he had had any such exalted expectation, he would not have prospered. He had expected labour, and he found it, and did it, and made the best of it. In this, his prosperity consisted.

A certain portion of his time was passed at Cambridge, where he read with undergraduates as a sort of tolerated smuggler who drove a contraband trade in European languages, instead of conveying Greek and Latin through the Custom-house. The rest of his time he passed in London.

Now, from the days when it was always summer in Eden, to these days when it is mostly winter in fallen latitudes, the world of a man has invariably gone one way—Charles Darnay’s way—the way of the love of a woman.

He had loved Lucie Manette from the hour of his

danger. He had never heard a sound so sweet and dear as the sound of her compassionate voice; he had never seen a face so tenderly beautiful, as hers when it was confronted with his own on the edge of the grave that had been dug for him. But, he had not yet spoken to her on the subject; the assassination at the deserted chateau far away beyond the heaving water and the long, long, dusty roads—the solid stone chateau which had itself become the mere mist of a dream—had been done a year, and he had never yet, by so much as a single spoken word, disclosed to her the state of his heart.

That he had his reasons for this, he knew full well. It was again a summer day when, lately arrived in London from his college occupation, he turned into the quiet corner in Soho, bent on seeking an opportunity of opening his mind to Doctor Manette. It was the close of the summer day, and he knew Lucie to be out with Miss Pross.

He found the Doctor reading in his arm-chair at a window. The energy which had at once supported him under his old sufferings and aggravated their sharpness, had been gradually restored to him. He was now a very energetic man indeed, with great firmness of purpose, strength of resolution, and vigour of action. In his recovered energy he was sometimes a little fitful and sudden, as he had at first been in the exercise of his other recovered faculties; but, this had never been frequently observable, and had grown more and more rare.

He studied much, slept little, sustained a great deal of fatigue with ease, and was equably cheerful. To him, now entered Charles Darnay, at sight of whom he laid aside his book and held out his hand.

“Charles Darnay! I rejoice to see you. We have been counting on your return these three or four days past. Mr. Stryver and Sydney Carton were both here yesterday, and both made you out to be more than due.”

“I am obliged to them for their interest in the matter,” he answered, a little coldly as to them, though very warmly as to the Doctor. “Miss Manette—”

“Is well,” said the Doctor, as he stopped short, “and your return will delight us all. She has gone out on some household matters, but will soon be home.”

“Doctor Manette, I knew she was from home. I took the opportunity of her being from home, to beg to speak to you.”

There was a blank silence.

“Yes!” said the Doctor, with evident constraint. “Bring your chair here, and speak on.”

He complied as to the chair, but appeared to find the speaking on less easy.

"I have had the happiness, Doctor Manette, of being so intimate here," so he at length began, "for some year and a half, that I hope the topic on which I am about to touch may not—"

He was stayed by the Doctor's putting out his hand to stop him. When he had kept it so a little while, he said, drawing it back :

"Is Lucie the topic?"

"She is."

"It is hard for me to speak of her, at any time. It is very hard for me to hear her spoken of in that tone of yours, Charles Darnay."

"It is a tone of fervent admiration, true homage and deep love, Doctor Manette!" he said, deferentially.

There was another blank silence before her father rejoined :

"I believe it. I do you justice. I believe it."

His constraint was so manifest, and it was so manifest, too, that it originated in an unwillingness to approach the subject, that Charles Darnay hesitated.

"Shall I go on, sir?"

Another blank.

"Yes, go on."

"You anticipate what I would say, though you cannot know how earnestly I say it, how earnestly I feel it, without knowing my secret heart, and the hopes and fears and anxieties with which it has long been laden. Dear Doctor Manette, I love your daughter fondly, dearly, disinterestedly, devotedly. If ever there were love in the world, I love her. You have loved yourself; let your old love speak for me!"

The Doctor sat with his face turned away, and his eyes bent on the ground. At the last words, he stretched out his hand again, hurriedly, and cried :

"Not that, sir! Let that be! I adjure you, do not recall that!"

His cry was so like a cry of actual pain, that it rang in Charles Darnay's ears long after he had ceased. He motioned with the hand he had extended, and it seemed to be an appeal to Darnay to pause. The latter so received it, and remained silent.

"I ask your pardon," said the Doctor, in a subdued tone, after some moments. "I do not doubt your loving Lucie; you may be satisfied of it."

He turned towards him in his chair, but did not look at him, or raise his eyes. His chin dropped upon his hand, and his white hair overshadowed his face :

"Have you spoken to Lucie?"

"No."

"Nor written?"

“Never.”

“It would be ungenerous to affect not to know that your self-denial is to be referred to your consideration for her father. Her father thanks you.”

He offered his hand; but, his eyes did not go with it.

“I know,” said Darnay, respectfully, “how can I fail to know, Doctor Manette, I who have seen you together from day to day, that between you and Miss Manette there is an affection so unusual, so touching, so belonging to the circumstances in which it has been nurtured, that it can have few parallels, even in the tenderness between a father and child. I know, Doctor Manette—how can I fail to know—that, mingled with the affection and duty of a daughter who has become a woman, there is, in her heart towards you, all the love and reliance of infancy itself. I know that, as in her childhood she had no parent, so she is now devoted to you with all the constancy and fervour of her present years and character, united to the trustfulness and attachment of the early days in which you were lost to her. I know perfectly well that if you had been restored to her from the world beyond this life, you could hardly be invested, in her sight, with a more sacred character than that in which you are always with her. I know that when she is clinging to you, the hands of baby, girl, and woman, all in one, are round your neck. I know that in loving you she sees and loves her mother at her own age, sees and loves you at my age, loves her mother broken-hearted, loves you through your dreadful trial and in your blessed restoration. I have known this, night and day, since I have known you in your home.”

Her father sat silent, with his face bent down. His breathing was a little quickened; but he repressed all other signs of agitation.

“Dear Doctor Manette, always knowing this, always seeing her and you with this hallowed light about you, I have forborne, and forborne, as long as it was in the nature of man to do it, I have felt, and do even now feel, that to bring my love—even mine—between you, is to touch your history with something not quite so good as itself. But I love her. Heaven is my witness that I love her!”

“I believe it,” answered her father, mournfully. “I thought so, before now. I believe it.”

“But, do not believe,” said Darnay, upon whose ear the mournful voice struck with a reproachful sound, “that if my fortune was so cast as that, being one day so happy as to make her my wife, I must at any time put any separation between her and you, I could or would breathe a word of what I now say. Besides that I should

know it to be hopeless, I should know it to be a baseness. If I had any such possibility, even at a remote distance of years, harboured in my thoughts and hidden in my heart—if it ever had been there—if it ever could be there—I could not now touch this honoured hand.”

He laid his own upon it as he spoke.

“No, dear Doctor Manette. Like you, a voluntary exile from France; like you, driven from it by its distractions, oppressions, and miseries; like you, striving to live away from it by my own exertions, and trusting in a happier future; I look only to sharing your fortunes, sharing your life and home, and being faithful to you to the death. Not to divide with Lucie her privilege as your child, companion, and friend; but to come in aid of it, and bind her closer to you, if such a thing can be.”

His touch still lingered on her father's hand. Answering the touch for a moment, but not coldly, her father rested his hands upon the arms of his chair, and looked up for the first time since the beginning of the conference. A struggle was evidently in his face; a struggle with that occasional look which had a tendency in it to dark doubt and dread.

“You speak so feelingly and so manfully, Charles Darnay, that I thank you with all my heart, and will open all my heart—or nearly so. Have you any reason to believe that Lucie loves you?”

“None. As yet, none.”

“Is it the immediate object of this confidence, that you may at once ascertain that, with my knowledge?”

“Not even so. I might not have the hopefulness to do it for weeks; I might (mistaken or not mistaken) have that hopefulness to-morrow.”

“Do you seek any guidance from me?”

“I ask none, sir. But I have thought it possible that you might have it in your power, if you should deem it right, to give me some.”

“Do you seek any promise from me?”

“I do seek that.”

“What is it?”

“I well understand that, without you, I could have no hope. I well understand that, even if Miss Manette held me at this moment in her innocent heart—do not think I have the presumption to assume so much—I could retain no place in it against her love for her father.”

“If that be so, do you see what, on the other hand, is involved in it?”

“I understand equally well, that a word from her father in any suitor's favour, would outweigh herself and all the world. For which reason, Doctor Manette,”

said Darney, modestly but firmly, "I would not ask that word, to save my life."

"I am sure of it. Charley Darney, mysteries arise out of close love, as well as out of wide division; in the former case, they are subtle and delicate, and difficult to penetrate. My daughter Lucie is, in this one respect, such a mystery to me; I can make no guess at the state of her heart."

"May I ask, sir, if you think she is—" As he hesitated, her father supplied the rest.

"Is sought by any other suitor?"

"It is what I meant to say."

Her father considered a little before he answered:

"You have seen Mr. Carton here, yourself. Mr. Stryver is here too, occasionally. If it be at all, it can only be by one of these."

"Or both," said Darney.

"I had not thought of both; I should not think either, likely. You want a promise from me. Tell me what it is."

"It is, that if Miss Manette should bring to you at any time, on her own part, such a confidence as I have ventured to lay before you, you will bear testimony to what I have said, and to your belief in it. I hope you may be able to think so well of me, as to urge no influence against me. I say nothing more of my stake in this; this is what I ask. The condition on which I ask it, and which you have an undoubted right to require, I will observe immediately."

"I give the promise," said the Doctor, "without any condition. I believe your object to be, purely and truthfully, as you have stated it. I believe your intention is to perpetuate, and not to weaken, the ties between me and my other and far dearer self. If she should ever tell me that you are essential to her perfect happiness, I will give her to you. If there were—Charles Darnay, if there were—"

The young man had taken his hand gratefully; their hands were joined as the Doctor spoke:

"—any fancies, any reasons, any apprehensions, anything whatsoever, new or old, against the man she really loved—the direct responsibility thereof not lying on his head—they should all be obliterated for her sake. She is everything to me; more to me than suffering, more to me than wrong, more to me—Well! This is idle talk."

So strange was the way in which he faded into silence, and so strange his fixed look when he had ceased to speak, that Darnay felt his own hand turn cold in the hand that slowly released and dropped it.

"You said something to me," said Doctor Manette, breaking into a smile. "What was it you said to me?"

He was at a loss how to answer, until he remembered having spoken of a condition. Relieved as his mind reverted to that, he answered :

“Your confidence in me ought to be returned with full confidence on my part. My present name, though but slightly changed from my mother’s, is not, as you will remember, my own. I wish to tell you what that is, and why I am in England.”

“Stop!” said the Doctor of Beauvais.

“I wish it, that I may the better deserve your confidence, and have no secret from you.”

“Stop!”

For an instant, the Doctor even had his two hands at his ears; for another instant, even had his two hands laid on Darnay’s lips.

“Tell me when I ask you, not now. If your suit should prosper, if Lucie should love you, you shall tell me on your marriage morning. Do you promise?”

“Willingly.”

“Give me your hand. She will be home directly, and it is better she should not see us together to-night. Go! God bless you!”

It was dark when Charles Darnay left him, and it was an hour later and darker when Lucie came home; she hurried into the room alone—for Miss Pross had gone straight up-stairs—and was surprised to find his reading-chair empty.

“My father!” she called to him. “Father dear!”

Nothing was said in answer, but she heard a low hammering sound in his bedroom. Passing lightly across the intermediate room, she looked in at his door and came running back frightened, crying to herself, with her blood all chilled, “What shall I do! What shall I do!”

Her uncertainty lasted but a moment; she hurried back and tapped at his door, and softly called to him. The noise ceased at the sound of her voice, and he presently came out to her, and they walked up and down together for a long time.

She came down from her bed, to look at him in his sleep that night. He slept heavily, and his tray of shoemaking tools and his old unfinished work, were all as usual.

CHAPTER XI.

A Companion Picture.

"SYDNEY," said Mr. Stryver, on that self-same night, or morning, to his jackal; "mix another bowl of punch; I have something to say to you."

Sydney had been working double tides that night, and the night before, and the night before that, and a good many nights in succession, making a grand clearance among Mr. Stryver's papers before the setting in of the long vacation. The clearance was effected at last; the Stryver arrears were handsomely fetched up; everything was got rid of until November should come with its fogs atmospheric and fogs legal, and bring grist to the mill again.

Sydney was none the livelier and none the soberer for so much application. It had taken a deal of extra wet-towelling to pull him through the night; a correspondingly extra quantity of wine had preceded the towelling; and he was in a very damaged condition, as he now pulled his turban off and threw it into the basin in which he had steeped it at intervals for the last six hours.

"Are you mixing that other bowl of punch?" said Stryver the portly, with his hands in his waistband, glancing round from the sofa where he lay on his back.

"I am."

"Now look here! I am going to tell you something that will rather surprise you, and that perhaps will make you think me not quite as shrewd as you usually do think me. I intend to marry!"

"Do you!"

"Yes. And not for money. What do you say now?"

"I don't feel disposed to say much. Who is she?"

"Guess."

"Do I know her?"

"Guess."

"I am not going to guess, at five o'clock in the morning, with my brains frying and sputtering in my head. If you want me to guess, you must ask me to dinner."

"Well then, I'll tell you," said Stryver, coming slowly into a sitting posture. "Sydney, I rather despair of making myself intelligible to you, because you are such an insensible dog."

"And you," returned Sydney, busy concocting the punch, "are such a sensitive and poetical spirit."

"Come!" rejoined Stryver, laughing boastfully,

"though I don't prefer any claim to being the soul of Romance (for I hope I know better), still, I am a tenderer sort of fellow than *you*."

"You are a luckier, if you mean that."

"I don't mean that. I mean, I am a man of more—more—"

"Say gallantry, while you are about it," suggested Carton.

"Well! I'll say gallantry. My meaning is that, I am a man," said Stryver, inflating himself at his friend as he made the punch, "who cares more to be agreeable, who takes more pains to be agreeable, who knows better how to be agreeable, in a woman's society, than you do."

"Go on," said Sydney Carton.

"No; but before I go on," said Stryver, shaking his head in his bullying way, "I'll have this out with you. You have been at Doctor Manette's house as much as I have, or more than I have. Why, I have been ashamed of your moroseness there! Your manners have been of that silent and sullen and hang-dog kind, that, upon my life and soul, I have been ashamed of you, Sydney!"

"It should be very beneficial to a man in your practice at the bar, to be ashamed of anything," returned Sydney; "you ought to be much obliged to me."

"You shall not get off in that way," rejoined Stryver, shouldering the rejoinder at him; "no, Sydney, it's my duty to tell you—and I tell you to your face to do you good—that you are a de-vilish ill-conditioned fellow in that sort of society. You are a disagreeable fellow."

Sydney drank a bumper of the punch he had made, and laughed.

"Look at me!" said Stryver, squaring himself; "I have less need to make myself agreeable than you have, being more independent in circumstances. Why do I do it?"

"I never saw you do it yet," muttered Carton.

"I do it because it's politic; I do it on principle. And look at me! I get on."

"You don't get on with your account of your matrimonial intentions," answered Carton, with a careless air: "I wish you would keep to that. As to me—will you never understand that I am incorrigible?"

He asked the question with some appearance of scorn.

"You have no business to be incorrigible," was his friend's answer, delivered in no very soothing tone.

"I have no business to be, at all, that I know of," said Sydney Carton. "Who is the lady?"

"Now, don't let my announcement of the name make you uncomfortable, Sydney," said Mr. Stryver, preparing him with ostentatious friendliness for the disclosure

he was about to make, "because I know you don't mean half you say ; and if you meant it all, it would be of no importance. I make this little preface, because you once mentioned the young lady to me in slighting terms."

"I did ?"

"Certainly ; and in these chambers."

Sydney Carton looked at his punch and looked at his complacent friend ; drank his punch and looked at his complacent friend.

"You made mention of the young lady as a golden-haired doll. The young lady is Miss Manette. If you had been a fellow of any sensitiveness or delicacy of feeling in that kind of way, Sydney, I might have been a little resentful of your employing such a designation ; but you are not. You want that sense altogether ; therefore, I am no more annoyed when I think of the expression, than I should be annoyed by a man's opinion of a picture of mine, who had no eye for pictures ; or of a piece of music of mine, who had no ear for music."

Sydney Carton drank the punch at a great rate ; drank it by bumpers, looking at his friend.

"Now you know all about it, Syd," said Mr. Stryver.

"I don't care about fortune : she is a charming creature, and I have made up my mind to please myself : on the whole, I think I can afford to please myself. She will have in me a man already pretty well off, and a rapidly rising man, and a man of some distinction : its a piece of good fortune for her, but she is worthy of good fortune.

Are you astonished ?"

Carton, still drinking the punch, rejoined, "Why should I be astonished ?"

"You approve ?"

Carton, still drinking the punch, rejoined, "Why should I not approve ?"

"Well !" said his friend Stryver, "you take it more easily than I fancied you would, and are less mercenary on my behalf than I thought you would be ; though, to be sure, you know well enough by this time that your ancient chum is a man of a pretty strong will. Yes, Sydney, I have had enough of this style of life, with no other as a change from it ; I feel that it is a pleasant thing for a man to have a home when he feels inclined to go to it (when he doesn't, he can stay away), and I feel that Miss Manette will tell well in any station, and will always do me credit. So I have made up my mind. And now, Sydney, old boy, I want to say a word to *you* about *your* prospects. You are in a bad way, you know ; you really are in a bad way. You don't know the value of money, you live hard, you'll knock up one of these days, and be ill and poor ; you really ought to think about a nurse."

The prosperous patronage with which he said it, made him look twice as big as he was, and four times as offensive.

"Now, let me recommend you," pursued Stryver, "to look it in the face. I have looked it in the face, in my different way; look it in the face, you, in your different way. Marry. Provide somebody to take care of you. Never mind your having no enjoyment of women's society, nor understanding of it, nor tact for it. Find out somebody. Find out some respectable woman with a little property—somebody in the landlady way, or lodging-letting way—and marry her against a rainy day. That's the kind of thing for *you*. Now think of it, Sydney."

"I'll think of it," said Sydney.

CHAPTER XII.

The Fellow of Delicacy.

MR. STRYVER having made up his mind to that magnificent bestowal of good fortune on the Doctor's daughter, resolved to make her happiness known to her before he left town for the Long Vacation. After some mental debating of the point, he came to the conclusion that it would be as well to get all the preliminaries done with, and they could then arrange at their leisure whether he should give her his hand a week or two before Michaelmas Term, or in the little Christmas vacation between it and Hilary.

As to the strength of his case, he had not a doubt about it, but clearly saw his way to the verdict. Argued with the jury on substantial worldly grounds—the only grounds ever worth taking into account—it was a plain case, and had not a weak spot in it. He called himself for the plaintiff, there was no getting over his evidence, the counsel for the defendant threw up his brief, and the jury did not even turn to consider. After trying it, Stryver C. J. was satisfied that no plainer case could be.

Accordingly, Mr. Stryver inaugurated the Long Vacation with a formal proposal to take Miss Manette to Vauxhall Gardens; that failing, to Ranelagh; that unaccountably failing too, it behooved him to present himself in Soho, and there declare his noble mind.

Towards Soho, therefore, Mr. Stryver shouldered his way from the Temple, while the bloom of the Long Vacation's infancy was still upon it. Anybody who had seen him projecting himself into Soho while he was yet

on Saint Dunstan's side of Temple Bar, bursting in his full-blown way along the pavement, to the jostlement of all weaker people, might have seen how safe and strong he was.

His way taking him past Tellson's, and he both banking at Tellson's and knowing Mr. Lorry as the intimate friend of the Manettes, it entered Mr. Stryver's mind to enter the bank, and reveal to Mr. Lorry the brightness of the Soho horizon. So, he pushed open the door with the weak rattle in its throat, stumbled down the two steps, got past the two ancient cashiers, and shouldered himself into the musty back closet where Mr. Lorry sat at great books ruled for figures, with perpendicular iron bars to his window as if that were ruled for figures too, and everything under the clouds were a sum.

"Halloa!" said Mr. Stryver. "How do you do? I hope you are well!"

It was Stryver's grand peculiarity that he always seemed too big for any place, or space. He was so much too big for Tellson's that old clerks in distant corners looked up with looks of remonstrance, as though he squeezed them against the wall. The House itself, magnificently reading the paper quite in the far-off perspective, lowered displeased, as if the Stryver head had been butted into its responsible waistcoat.

The discreet Mr. Lorry said, in a sample tone of the voice he would recommend under the circumstances, "How do you do, Mr. Stryver? How do you do, sir?" and shook hands. There was a peculiarity in his manner of shaking hands, always to be seen in any clerk at Tellson's who shook hands with a customer when the House prevailed the air. He shook in a self-abnegating way, as one who shook for Tellson and Co.

"Can I do anything for you, Mr. Stryver?" asked Mr. Lorry, in his business character.

"Why, no thank you; this is a private visit to yourself, Mr. Lorry; I have come for a private word."

"Oh indeed!" said Mr. Lorry, bending down his ear, while his eye strayed to the House afar off.

"I am going," said Mr. Stryver, leaning his arms confidentially on the desk: whereupon, although it was a large double one, there appeared to be not half desk enough for him: "I am going to make an offer of myself in marriage to your agreeable little friend Miss Manette, Mr. Lorry."

"Oh dear me!" cried Mr. Lorry, rubbing his chin, and looking at his visitor dubiously.

"Oh dear me, sir?" repeated Stryver, drawing back. "Oh dear you, sir? What may your meaning be, Mr. Lorry?"

"My meaning?" answered the man of business, "is,

of course, friendly and appreciative, and that it does you the greatest credit, and—in short, my meaning is everything you could desire. But—really, you know, Mr. Stryver—” Mr. Lorry paused, and shook his head at him in the oddest manner, as if he were compelled against his will to add, internally, “you know there really is so much too much of you!”

“Well!” said Stryver, slapping the desk with his contentious hand, opening his eyes wider, and taking a long breath, “if I understand you, Mr. Lorry, I’ll be hanged!”

Mr. Lorry adjusted his little wig at both ears as a means towards that end, and bit the feather of a pen.

“D—n it all, sir!” said Stryver, staring at him, “am I not eligible?”

“Oh dear yes! Yes. Oh yes, you’re eligible!” said Mr. Lorry. “If you say eligible, you are eligible.”

“Am I not prosperous?” asked Stryver.

“Oh! if you come to prosperous, you are prosperous,” said Mr. Lorry.

“And advancing?”

“If you come to advancing, you know,” said Mr. Lorry, delighted to be able to make another admission, “nobody can doubt that.”

“Then what on earth is your meaning, Mr. Lorry?” demanded Stryver, perceptibly crestfallen.

“Well! I—Were you going there now?” asked Mr. Lorry.

“Straight!” said Stryver, with a plump of his fist on the desk.

“Then I think I wouldn’t, if I was you.”

“Why?” said Stryver. “Now, I’ll put you in a corner,” forensically shaking a forefinger at him. “You are a man of business and bound to have a reason. State your reason. Why wouldn’t you go?”

“Because,” said Mr. Lorry, “I wouldn’t go on such an object without having some cause to believe that I should succeed.”

“D—n ME!” cried Stryver, “but this beats everything.”

Mr. Lorry glanced at the distant House, and glanced at the angry Stryver.

“Here’s a man of business—a man of years—a man of experience—in a Bank,” said Stryver: “and having summed up three leading reasons for complete success, he says there’s no reason at all! Says it with his head on!” Mr. Stryver remarked upon the peculiarity as if it would have been infinitely less remarkable if he had said it with his head off.

“When I speak of success, I speak of success with the young lady; and when I speak of causes and reasons to

make success probable, I speak of causes and reasons that will tell as such with the young lady. The young lady, my good sir," said Mr. Lorry, mildly tapping the Stryver arm, "the young lady. The young lady goes before all."

"Then you mean to tell me, Mr. Lorry," said Stryver, squaring his elbows, "that it is your deliberate opinion that the young lady at present in question is a mincing Fool?"

"Not exactly so. I mean to tell you, Mr. Stryver," said Mr. Lorry, reddening, "that I will hear no disrespectful word of that young lady from any lips; and that if I knew any man—which I hope I do not—whose taste was so coarse, and whose temper was so overbearing, that he could not restrain himself from speaking disrespectfully of that young lady at this desk, not even Tellson's should prevent my giving him a piece of my mind."

The necessity of being angry in a suppressed tone had put Mr. Stryver's blood-vessels into a dangerous state when it was his turn to be angry; Mr. Lorry's veins, methodical as their courses could usually be, were in no better state now it was his turn.

"That is what I mean to tell you, sir," said Mr. Lorry. "Pray let there be no mistake about it."

Mr. Stryver sucked the end of a ruler for a little while, and then stood hitting a tune out of his teeth with it, which probably gave him the toothache. He broke the awkward silence by saying:

"This is something new to me, Mr. Lorry. You deliberately advise me not to go up to Soho and offer myself—myself, Stryver of the King's Bench bar?"

"Do you ask me for my advice, Mr. Stryver?"

"Yes I do."

"Very good. Then I give it, and you have repeated it correctly."

"And all I can say of it, is," laughed Stryver with a vexed laugh, "that this—ha, ha!—beats everything past, present, and to come."

"Now understand me," pursued Mr. Lorry. "As a man of business, I am not justified in saying anything about this matter, for, as a man of business, I know nothing of it. But, as an old fellow, who has carried Miss Manette in his arms, who is the trusted friend of Miss Manette and of her father too, and who has a great affection for them both, I have spoken. The confidence is not of my seeking, recollect. Now, you think I may not be right?"

"Not I!" said Stryver, whistling. "I can't undertake to find third parties in common sense; I can only

find it for myself. I suppose sense in certain quarters ; you suppose mincing bread-and-butter nonsense. It's new to me, but you are right, I dare say."

"What I suppose, Mr. Stryver, I claim to characterise for myself. And understand me, sir," said Mr. Lorry, quickly flushing again. "I will not—not even at Tellson's—have it characterised for me by any gentleman breathing."

"There ! I beg your pardon !" said Stryver.

"Granted. Thank you. Well, Mr. Stryver, I was about to say :—it might be painful to you to find yourself mistaken, it might be painful to Doctor Manette to have the task of being explicit with you, it might be very painful to Miss Manette to have the task of being explicit with you. You know the terms upon which I have the honour and happiness to stand with the family. If you please, committing you in no way, representing you in no way, I will undertake to correct my advice by the exercise of a little new observation and judgment expressly brought to bear upon it. If you should then be dissatisfied with it, you can but test its soundness for yourself ; if, on the other hand, you should be satisfied with it, and it should be what it now is, it may spare all sides what is best spared. What do you say ?"

"How long would you keep me in town ?"

"Oh ! It is only a question of a few hours. I could go to Soho in the evening, and come to your chambers afterwards."

"Then I say yes," said Stryver : "I won't go up there now, I am not so hot upon it as that comes to ; I say yes, and I shall expect you to look in to-night. "Good-morning."

Then Mr. Stryver turned and burst out of the Bank, causing such a concussion of air on his passage through, that to stand up against it bowing behind the two counters, required the utmost remaining strength of the two ancient clerks. Those venerable and feeble persons were always seen by the public in the act of bowing, and were popularly believed, when they had bowed a customer out, still to keep on bowing in the empty office until they bowed another customer in.

The barrister was keen enough to divine that the banker would not have gone so far in his expression of opinion on any less solid ground than moral certainty. Unprepared as he was for the large pill he had to swallow, he got it down. "And now," said Mr. Stryver, shaking his forensic forefinger at the Temple in general, when it was down, "my way out of this, is, to put you all in the wrong."

It was a bit of the art of an Old Bailey tactician, in which he found great relief. "You shall not put me in

the wrong, young lady," said Mr. Stryver; "I'll do that for you."

Accordingly, when Mr. Lorry called that night as late as ten o'clock, Mr. Stryver, among a quantity of books and papers littered out for the purpose, seemed to have nothing less on his mind than the subject of the morning. He even showed surprise when he saw Mr. Lorry, and was altogether in an absent and preoccupied state.

"Well!" said that good-natured emissary, after a full half hour of bootless attempts to bring him round to the question, "I have been to Soho."

"To Soho?" repeated Mr. Stryver, coldly. "Oh, to be sure! What am I thinking of!"

"And I have no doubt," said Mr. Lorry, "that I was right in the conversation we had. My opinion is confirmed, and I reiterate my advice."

"I assure you," returned Mr. Stryver, in the friendliest way, "that I am sorry for it on your account, and sorry for it on the poor father's account. I know this must always be a sore subject with the family; let us say no more about it."

"I don't understand you," said Mr. Lorry.

"I dare not say not," rejoined Stryver, nodding his head in a smoothing and final way; "no matter, no no matter."

"But it does matter," Mr. Lorry urged.

"No it doesn't; I assure you it doesn't. Having supposed that there was sense where there is no sense, and a laudable ambition where there is not a laudable ambition, I am well out of my mistake, and no harm is done. Young women have committed similar follies often before, and have repented them in poverty and obscurity often before. In an unselfish aspect, I am sorry that the thing is dropped, because it would have been a bad thing for me a worldly point of view; in a selfish aspect, I am glad that the thing has dropped, because it would have been a bad thing for me in a worldly point of view—it is hardly necessary to say I could have gained nothing by it. There is no harm at all done. I have not proposed to the young lady, and, between ourselves, I am by no means certain, on reflection, that I ever should have committed myself to that extent. Mr. Lorry, you cannot control the mincing vanities and giddinesses of empty-headed girls; you must not expect to do it, or you will always be disappointed. Now, pray say no more about it. I tell you, I regret it on account of others, but I am satisfied on my own account. And I am really very much obliged to you for allowing me to sound you, and for giving me your advice: you know the young lady better than I do; you were right, it never would have done."

Mr. Lorry was so taken aback, that he looked quite stupidly at Mr. Stryver shouldering him towards the door, with an appearance of showering generosity, forbearance, and good will, on his erring head. "Make the best of it, my dear sir," said Stryver; "say no more about it; thank you again for allowing me to sound you; good night!"

Mr. Lorry was out in the night, before he knew where he was. Mr. Stryver was lying back on his sofa, winking at his ceiling.

CHAPTER XIII.

The Fellow of no Delicacy.

IF Sydney Carton ever shone anywhere, he certainly never shone in the house of Doctor Manette. He had been there often, during a whole year, and had always been the same moody and morose loungee there. When he cared to talk, he talked well; but, the cloud of caring for nothing, which overshadowed him with such a fatal darkness, was very rarely pierced by the light within him.

And yet he did care something for the streets that environed that house, and for the senseless stones that made their pavements. Many a night he vaguely and unhappily wandered there, when wine had brought no transitory goodness to him; many a dreary daybreak revealed his solitary figure lingering there, and still lingering there when the first beams of the sun brought into strong relief, removed beauties of architecture in spires of churches and lofty buildings, as perhaps the quiet time brought some sense of better things, else forgotten and unattainable, into his mind. Of late, the neglected bed in the Temple court had known him more scantily than ever; and often when he had thrown himself upon it no longer than a few minutes, he had got up again, and haunted that neighborhood.

On a day in August, when Mr. Stryver (after notifying to his jackal that "he had thought better of that marrying matter") had carried his delicacy into Devonshire, and when the sight and scent of flowers in the City streets had some waifs of goodness in them for the worst, of health for the sickliest, and of youth for the oldest, Sydney's feet still trod those stones. From being irresolute and purposeless, his feet became animated by an intention, and, in the working out of that intention, they took him to the Doctor's door.

He was shown up-stairs, and found Lucie at her work, alone. She had never been quite at her ease with him, and received him with some little embarrassment as he

seated himself near her table. But, looking up at his face in the interchange of the first few common-places, she observed a change in it.

"I fear you are not well, Mr. Carton!"

"No. But the life I lead, Miss Manette, is not conducive to health. What is to be expected of, or by, such profligates?"

"Is it not—forgive me; I have begun the question on my lips—a pity to live no better life?"

"God knows it is a shame!"

"Then why not change it?"

Looking gently at him again, she was surprised and saddened to see that there were tears in his eyes. There were tears in his voice too, as he answered:

"It is too late for that. I shall never be better than I am. I shall sink lower, and be worse."

He leaned an elbow on her table, and covered his eyes with his hand. The table trembled in the silence that followed.

She had never seen him softened, and was much distressed. He knew her to be so, without looking at her, and said:

"Pray forgive me, Miss Manette. I break down before the knowledge of what I want to say to you. Will you hear me?"

"If it will do you any good. Mr. Carton, if it would make you any happier, it would make me very glad!"

"God bless you for your sweet compassion!"

He unshaded his face after a little while, and spoke steadily.

"Don't be afraid to hear me. Don't shrink from anything I say. I am like one who died young. All my life might have been."

"No, Mr. Carton. I am sure that the best part of it might still be; I am sure that you might be much, much, worthier of yourself."

"Say of you, Miss Manette, and although I know better—although in the mystery of my own wretched heart I know better—I shall never forget it!"

She was pale and trembling. He came to her relief with a fixed despair of himself which made the interview unlike any other that could have been holden.

"If it had been possible, Miss Manette, that you could have returned the love of the man you see before you—self-flung away, wasted, drunken, poor creature of misuse as you know him to be—he would have been conscious this day and hour, in spite of his happiness, that he would bring you to misery, bring you to sorrow and repentance, blight you, disgrace you, pull you down with him. I know very well that you can have no

tenderness for me ; I ask for none ; I am even thankful that it cannot be."

"Without it, can I not save you, Mr. Carton? Can I not recal you—forgive me again!—to a better course! Can I in no way repay your confidence? I know this is a confidence," she modestly said, after a little hesitation, and in earnest tears, "I know you would say this to no one else. Can I turn it to no good account for yourself, Mr. Carton?"

He shook his head.

"To none. No, Miss Manette, to none. If you will hear me through a very little more, all you can ever do for me is done. I wish you to know that you have been the last dream of my soul. In my degradation, I have not been so degraded but that the sight of you with your father, and of this home made such a home by you, has stirred old shadows that I had thought had died out of me. Since I knew you, I have been troubled by a remorse that I thought would never reproach me again, and have heard whispers from old voices impelling me upward, that I thought were silent for ever. I have had unformed ideas of striving afresh, beginning anew, shaking off sloth and sensuality, and fighting out the abandoned fight. A dream, all a dream, that ends in nothing, and leaves the sleeper where he lay down, but I wish you to know that you inspired it."

"Will nothing of it remain? O Mr. Carton, think again! Try again!"

"No, Miss Manette; all through it, I have known myself to be quite undeserving. And yet I have had the weakness, and have still the weakness, to wish you to know with what a sudden mastery you kindled me, heap of ashes that I am, into fire—a fire, however, inseparable in its nature from myself, quickening nothing, lighting nothing, doing no service, idly burning away."

"Since it is my misfortune, Mr. Carton, to have made you more unhappy than you were before you knew me—"

"Don't say that, Miss Manette, for you would have reclaimed me, if anything could. You will not be the cause of my becoming worse."

"Since the state of your mind that you describe is, at all events, attributable to some influence of mine—this is what I mean, if I can make it plain—can I use no influence to serve you? Have I no power for good, with you, at all?"

"The utmost good that I am capable of now, Miss Manette, I have come here to realise. Let me carry through the rest of my misdirected life, the remembrance that I opened my heart to you, last of all the

world ; and that there was something left in me at this time which you could deplore and pity."

"Which I entreated you to believe, again and again, most fervently, with all my heart, was capable of better things, Mr. Carton!"

"Entreat me to believe it no more, Miss Manette. I have proved myself, and I know better. — I distress you ; I draw fast to an end. Will you let me believe, when I recall this day, that the last confidence of my life was reposed in your pure and innocent breast, and that it lies there alone, and will be shared by no one?"

"If that will be a consolation to you, yes."

"Not even by the dearest one ever to be known to you?"

"Mr. Carton," she answered, after an agitated pause, "the secret is yours, not mine ; and I promise to respect it."

"Thank you. And again, God bless you."

He put her hand to his lips, and moved towards the door.

"Be under no apprehension, Miss Manette, of my ever resuming this conversation by so much as a passing word. I will never refer to it again. If I were dead, that could not be surer than it is henceforth. In the hour of my death, I shall hold sacred the one good remembrance—and shall thank and bless you for it—that my last avowal of myself was made to you, and that my name, and faults, and miseries, were gently carried in your heart. May it otherwise be light and happy!"

He was so unlike what he had ever shown himself to be, and it was so sad to think how much he had thrown away, and how much he every day kept down and perverted, that Lucie Manette wept mournfully for him as he stood looking back at her.

"Be comforted!" he said, "I am not worth such feeling, Miss Manette. An hour or two hence, and any low companions and low habits that I scorn but yield to, will render me less worth such tears as those, than any wretch who creeps along the streets. Be comforted! But, within myself, I shall always be towards you, what I am now, though outwardly I shall be what you have heretofore seen me. The last supplication but one I make to you, is, that you will believe this of me."

"I will, Mr. Carton."

"My last supplication of all, is this ; and with it, I will relieve you of a visitor with whom I well know you have nothing in unison, and between whom and you there is an impassable space. It is useless to say it, I know, but it rises out of my soul. For you, and for any dear to you, I would do anything. If my career were of that better kind that there was any opportunity or

capacity of sacrifice in it, I would embrace any sacrifice for you and for those dear to you. Try to hold me in your mind, at some quiet times, as ardent and sincere in this one thing. The time will come, the time will not be long in coming, when new ties will be formed about you—ties that will bind you yet more tenderly and strongly to the home you so adorn—the dearest ties that will ever grace and gladden you. O Miss Manette, when the little picture of a happy father's face looks up in yours, when you see your own bright beauty springing up anew at your feet, think now and then that there is a man who would give his life, to keep a life you love beside you !”

He said “Farewell !” said “A last God bless you !” and left her.

CHAPTER XIV.

The Honest Tradesman.

To the eyes of Mr. Jeremiah Cruncher, sitting on his stool in Fleet-street with his grisly urchin beside him, a vast number and variety of objects in movement were every day presented. Who could sit upon anything in Fleet-street during the busy hours of the day, and not be dazed and deafened by two immense processions, one ever tending westward with the sun, the other ever tending eastward from the sun, both ever tending to the plains beyond the range of red and purple where the sun goes down !

With his straw in his mouth, Mr. Cruncher sat watching the two streams, like the heathen rustic who has for several centuries been on duty watching one stream—saving that Jerry had no expectation of their ever running dry. Nor would it have been an expectation of a hopeful kind, since a small part of his income was derived from the pilotage of timid women (mostly of a full habit and past the middle term of life) from Tellson's side of the tides to the opposite shore. Brief as such companionship was in every separate instance, Mr. Cruncher never failed to become so interested in the lady as to express a strong desire to have the honour of drinking her very good health. And it was from the gifts bestowed upon him towards the execution of this benevolent purpose, that he recruited his finances, as just now observed.

Time was, when a poet sat upon a stool in a public place, and mused in the sight of men. Mr. Cruncher sitting on a stool in a public place, but not being a poet, mused as little as possible, and looked about him.



"THINK THAT THERE IS A MAN WHO WOULD GIVE HIS LIFE TO KEEP A LIFE YOU LOVE BESIDE YOU!"
—A Tale of Two Cities, Vol. Eleven, page 135.

It fell out that he was thus engaged in a season when crowds were few, and belated women few, and when his affairs in general were so unprosperous as to awaken a strong suspicion in his breast that Mrs. Cruncher must have been "flopping" in some pointed manner, when an unusual concourse pouring down Fleet-street westward, attracted his attention. Looking that way, Mr. Cruncher made out that some kind of funeral was coming along, and that there was popular objection to this funeral, which engendered uproar.

"Young Jerry," said Mr. Cruncher, turning to his offspring, "it's a buryin'."

"Hooroar, father!" cried young Jerry.

The young gentleman uttered this exultant sound with mysterious significance. The elder gentleman took the cry so ill, that he watched his opportunity, and smote the young gentleman on the ear.

"What d'ye mean? What are you hooroaring at? What do you want to convey to your own father, you young Rip? This boy is getting too many for *me!*" said Mr. Cruncher, surveying him. "Him and his hooroars! Don't let me hear no more of you, or you shall feel some more of me. D'ye hear?"

"I warn't doing no harm," Young Jerry protested, rubbing his cheek.

"Drop it then," said Mr. Cruncher; "I won't have none of *your* no harms. Get a top of that there seat, and look at the crowd."

His son obeyed, and the crowd approached; they were bawling and hissing round a dingy hearse and dingy mourning coach, in which mourning coach there was only one mourner, dressed in the dingy trappings that were considered essential to the dignity of the position. The position appeared by no means to please him, however, with an increasing rabble surrounding the coach, deriding him, making grimaces at him, and incessantly groaning and calling out: "Yah! Spies! Tst! Yaha! Spies!" with many compliments too numerous and forcible to repeat.

Funerals had at all times a remarkable attraction for Mr. Cruncher; he always pricked up his senses, and became excited, when a funeral passed Tellson's. Naturally, therefore, a funeral with this uncommon attendance excited him greatly, and he asked of the first man who ran against him:

"What is it, brother? What's it about?"

"I don't know," said the man. "Spies! Yaha! Tst! Spies!"

He asked another man. "Who is it?"

"I don't know," returned the man: clapping his hands to his mouth nevertheless, and vociferating in a

surprising heat and with the greatest ardour, "Spies! Yaha! Tst, tst! Spi-ies!"

At length, a person better informed on the merits of the case, tumbled against him, and from this person he learned that the funeral was the funeral of one Roger Cly.

"Was He a spy?" asked Mr. Cruncher.

"Old Bailey spy," returned his informant. "Yaha! Tst! Yah! Old Bailey Spi-i-ies!"

"Why, to be sure!" exclaimed Jerry, recalling the Trial at which he had assisted. "I've seen him. Dead, is he?"

"Dead as mutton," returned the other, "and can't be too dead. Have 'em out, there! Spies! Pull 'em out, there! Spies!"

The idea was so acceptable in the prevalent absence of any idea, that the crowd caught it up with eagerness, and loudly repeating the suggestion to have 'em out, and to pull 'em out, mobbed the two vehicles so closely that they came to a stop. On the crowds opening the coach doors, the one mourner scuffled out of himself and was in their hands for a moment; but he was so alert, and made such good use of his time, that in another moment he was scouring away up a by-street, after shedding his cloak, hat, long hatband, white pocket-handkerchief, and other symbolical tears.

These, the people tore to pieces, and scattered far and wide with great enjoyment, while the tradesmen hurriedly shut up their shops; for a crowd in those times stopped at nothing, and was a monster much dreaded. They had already got the length of opening the hearse to take the coffin out, when some brighter genius proposed instead, its being escorted to its destination amidst general rejoicing. Practical suggestions being much needed, this suggestion, too, was received with acclamation, and the coach was immediately filled with eight inside and a dozen out, while as many people got on the roof of the hearse as could by any exercise of ingenuity stick upon it. Among the first of these volunteers was Jerry Cruncher himself, who modestly concealed his spiky head from the observation of Tellson's, in the further corner of the mourning coach.

The officiating undertakers made some protest against these changes in the ceremonies; but, the river being alarmingly near, and several voices remarking on the efficacy of cold immersion in bringing refractory members of the profession to reason, the protest was faint and brief. The remodelled procession started, with a chimney-sweep driving the hearse—advised by the regular driver, who was perched beside him, under close inspection, for the purpose—and with a pieman, also at-

tended by his cabinet minister, driving the mourning coach. A bear-leader, a popular street character of the time, was impressed as an additional ornament, before the cavalcade had gone far down the Strand; and his bear, who was black and very mangy, gave quite an Undertaking air to that part of the procession in which he walked.

Thus, with beer-drinking, pipe-smoking, song-roaring, and infinite caricaturing of woe, the disorderly procession went its way, recruiting at every step, and all the shops shutting up before it. Its destination was the old church of Saint Pancras, far off in the fields. It got there in the course of time; insisted on pouring into the burial-ground; finally accomplished the interment of the deceased Roger Cly in its own way, and highly to its own satisfaction.

The dead man disposed of, and the crowd being under the necessity of providing some other entertainment for itself, another brighter genius (or perhaps the same) conceived the humour of impeaching casual passers-by, as Old Bailey spies, and wreaking vengeance on them. Chase was given to some scores of inoffensive persons who had never been near the Old Bailey in their lives, in the realisation of this fancy, and they were roughly hustled and maltreated. The transition to the sport of window-breaking, and thence to the plundering of public-houses, was easy and natural. At last, after several hours, when sundry summer-houses had been pulled down, and some area railings had been torn up, to arm the more belligerent spirits, a rumour got about that the Guards were coming. Before this rumour, the crowd gradually melted away, and perhaps the Guards came, and perhaps they never came, and this was the usual progress of a mob.

Mr. Cruncher did not assist at the closing sports, but had remained behind in the churchyard to confer and condole with the undertakers. The place had a soothing influence on him. He procured a pipe from a neighbouring public-house, and smoked it, looking in at the railings and maturely considering the spot.

“Jerry,” said Mr. Cruncher, apostrophising himself in his usual way, “you see that there Cly that day, and you see with your own eyes that he was a young’un and a straight made’un.”

Having smoked his pipe out, and ruminated a little longer, he turned himself about, that he might appear before the hour of closing, on his station at Tellson’s. Whether his meditations on morality had touched his liver, or whether his general health had been previously at all amiss, or whether he desired to show a little attention to an eminent man, is not so much to the pur-

pose, as that he made a short call upon his medical adviser—a distinguished surgeon—on his way back.

Young Jerry relieved his father with dutiful interest, and reported No job in his absence. The bank closed, the ancient clerks came out, the usual watch was set, and Mr. Cruncher and his son went home to tea.

“Now, I tell you where it is!” said Mr. Cruncher to his wife, on entering. “If, as a honest tradesman, my wenturs goes wrong to-night, I shall make sure that you’ve been praying again me, and I shall work you for it just the same as if I seen you do it.”

The dejected Mrs. Cruncher shook her head.

“Why, you’re at it afore my face!” said Mr. Cruncher, with signs of angry apprehension.

“I am saying nothing.”

“Well, then; don’t meditate nothing. You might as well flop as meditate. You may as well go again me one way as another. Drop it altogether.”

“Yes, Jerry.”

“Yes, Jerry,” repeated Mr. Cruncher, sitting down to tea. “Ah! It *is* yes, Jerry. That’s about it. You may say yes, Jerry.”

Mr. Cruncher had no particular meaning in these sulky corroborations, but made use of them, as people not unfrequently do, to express general ironical dissatisfaction.

“You and your yes, Jerry,” said Mr. Cruncher, taking a bite out of his bread-and-butter, and seeming to help it down with a large invisible oyster out of his saucer. “Ah! I think so. I believe you.”

“You are going out to-night?” asked his decent wife, when he took another bite.

“Yes, I am.”

“May I go with you, father?” asked his son briskly.

“No, you mayn’t. I’m a going—as your mother knows—a fishing. That’s where I’m going to. Going a fishing.”

“Your fishing-rod gets rayther rusty; don’t it, father?”

“Never you mind.”

“Shall you bring any fish home, father?”

“If I don’t, you’ll have short commons to-morrow,” returned that gentleman, shaking his head; “that’s questions enough for you; I ain’t a going out, till you’ve been long a-bed.”

He devoted himself during the remainder of the evening to keeping a most vigilant watch on Mrs. Cruncher, and sullenly holding her in conversation that she might be prevented from meditating any petitions to his disadvantage. With this view, he urged his son to hold her in conversation also, and led the unfortunate woman a hard life by dwelling on any causes of complaint he

could bring against her, rather than he would leave her for a moment to her own reflections. The devoutest person could have rendered no greater homage to the efficacy of an honest prayer than he did in this distrust of his wife. It was as if a professed unbeliever in ghosts should be frightened by a ghost story.

“And mind you!” said Mr. Cruncher. “No games to-morrow! If I, as a honest tradesman, succeed in providing a jinte of meat or two, none of your not touching of it, and sticking to bread. If I, as a honest tradesman, am able to provide a little beer, none of your declaring on water. When you go to Rome, do as Rome does. Rome will be a ugly customer to you, if you don’t. I’m your Rome, you know.”

Then he began grumbling again :

“With your flying into the face of your own wittles and drink! I don’t know how scarce you mayn’t make the wittles and drink here, by your flopping tricks and your unfeeling conduct. Look at your boy; he *is* your’n, ain’t he? He’s as thin as a lath. Do you call yourself a mother, and not know that a mother’s first duty is to blow her boy out?”

This touched young Jerry on a tender place; who ad-jured his mother to perform her first duty, and, whatever else she did or neglected, above all things to lay especial stress on the discharge of that maternal function so affectingly and delicately indicated by his other parent.

Thus the evening wore away with the Cruncher family, until Young Jerry was ordered to bed, and his mother, laid under similar injunctions, obeyed them. Mr. Cruncher beguiled the earlier watches of the night with solitary pipes, and did not start upon his excursion until nearly one o’clock. Towards that small and ghostly hour, he rose up from his chair, took a key out of his pocket, opened a locked cupboard, and brought forth a sack, a crowbar of convenient size, a rope and chain, and other fishing-tackle of that nature. Disposing these articles about him in skilful manner, he bestowed a parting defiance on Mrs. Cruncher, extinguished the light, and went out.

Young Jerry, who had only made a feint of undressing when he went to bed, was not long after his father. Under cover of the darkness he followed out of the room, followed down the stairs, followed down the court, followed out into the streets. He was in no uneasiness concerning his getting into the house again, for it was full of lodgers, and the door stood ajar all night.

Impelled by a laudable ambition to study the art and mystery of his father’s honest calling, Young Jerry, keeping as close to house-fronts, walls, and doorways, as his eyes were close to one another, held his honoured parent

in view. The honoured parent steering Northward, had not gone far, when he was joined by another disciple of Izaak Walton, and the two trudged on together.

Within half an hour from the first starting, they were beyond the winking lamps, and the more than winking watchmen, and were out upon a lonely road. Another fisherman was picked up here—and that so silently, that if Young Jerry had been superstitious, he might have supposed the second follower of the gentle craft to have, all of a sudden, split himself into two.

The three went on, and Young Jerry went on, until the three stopped under a bank overhanging the road. Upon the top of the bank was a low brick wall surmounted by an iron railing. In the shadow of bank and wall, the three turned out of the road, and up a blind lane, of which the wall—there, risen to some eight or ten feet high—formed one side. Crouching down in a corner, peeping up the lane, the next object that Young Jerry saw, was the form of his honoured parent, pretty well defined against a watery and clouded moon, nimbly scaling an iron gate. He was soon over, and then the second fisherman got over, and then the third. They all dropped softly on the ground within the gate, and lay there a little—listening perhaps. Then, they moved away on their hands and knees.

It was now Young Jerry's turn to approach the gate: which he did, holding his breath. Crouching down again in a corner there, and looking in, he made out the three fishermen creeping through some rank grass; and all the gravestones in the churchyard—it was a large churchyard that they were in—looking on like ghosts in white, while the church tower itself looked on like the ghost of a monstrous giant. They did not creep far, before they stopped and stood upright. And then they began to fish.

They fished with a spade, at first. Presently the honoured parent appeared to be adjusting some instrument like a great corkscrew. Whatever tools they worked with, they worked hard, until the awful striking of the church clock so terrified Young Jerry, that he made off, with his hair as stiff as his father's.

But, his long-cherished desire to know more about these matters, not only stopped him in his running away, but lured him back again. They were still fishing perseveringly, when he peeped in at the gate for the second time; but, now they seemed to have got a bite. There was a screwing and complaining sound down below, and their bent figures were strained, as if by a weight. By slow degrees the weight broke away the earth upon it, and came to the surface. Young Jerry very well knew what it would be; but, when he saw it,

and saw his honoured parent about to wrench it open, he was so frightened, being new to the sight, that he made off again, and never stopped until had run a mile or more.

He would not have stopped then, for anything less necessary than breath, it being a spectral sort of race that he ran, and one highly desirable to get to the end of. He had a strong idea that the coffin he had seen was running after him; and, pictured as hopping on behind him, bolt upright upon its narrow end, always on the point of overtaking him and hopping on at his side—perhaps taking his arm—it was a pursuer to shun. It was an inconsistent and ubiquitous fiend too, for, while it was making the whole night behind him dreadful, he darted out into the roadway to avoid dark alleys, fearful of its coming hopping out of them like a drop-sical boy's Kite without tail and wings. It hid in doorways too, rubbing its horrible shoulders against doors, and drawing them up to its ears, as if it were laughing. It got into shadows on the road, and lay cunningly upon its back to trip him up. All this time, it was incessantly hopping on behind him and gaining on him, so that when the boy got to his own door he had reason for being half dead. And even then it would not leave him, but followed him up-stairs with a bump on every stair, scrambled into bed with him, and bumped down, dead and heavy, on his breast when he fell asleep.

From his oppressed slumber, Young Jerry in his closet was awakened after daybreak and before sunrise, by the presence of his father in the family room. Something had gone wrong with him; at least, so Young Jerry inferred, from the circumstance of his holding Mrs. Cruncher by the ears, and knocking the back of head against the head-board of the bed.

"I told you I would," said Mr. Cruncher, "and I did."

"Jerry, Jerry, Jerry!" his wife implored.

"You oppose yourself to the profit of the business," said Jerry, "and me and my partners suffer. You was to honour and obey; why the devil don't you?"

"I'll try to be a good wife, Jerry," the poor woman protested, with tears.

"Is it being a good wife to oppose your husband's business? Is it honouring your husband to dishonour his business? Is it obeying your husband to disobey him on the vital subject of his business?"

"You hadn't taken to the dreadful business then, Jerry."

"It's enough for you," retorted Mr. Cruncher, "to be the wife of a honest tradesman, and not to occupy your female mind with calculations when he took to

his trade or when he didn't. A honouring and obeying wife would let his trade alone altogether. Call yourself a religious woman. If you're a religious woman, give me a irreligious one! You have no more nat'ral sense of duty than the bed of this here Thames river has of a pile, and similarly it must be knocked into you."

The altercation was conducted in a low tone of voice, and terminated in the honest tradesman's kicking off his clay-soiled boots, and lying down at his length on the floor. After taking a timid peep at him lying on his back, with his rusty hands under his head for a pillow, his son lay down too, and fell asleep again.

There was no fish for breakfast, and not much of anything else. Mr. Cruncher was out of spirits, and out of temper, and kept an iron pot-lid by him as a projectile for the correction of Mrs. Cruncher, in case he should observe any symptoms of her saying Grace. He was brushed and washed at the usual hour, and set off with his son to pursue his ostensible calling.

Young Jerry, walking with the stool under his arm at his father's side along sunny and crowded Fleet-street, was a very different Young Jerry from him of the previous night, running home through darkness and solitude from his grim pursuer. His cunning was fresh with the day, and his qualms were gone with the night—in which particulars it is not improbable that he had compeers in Fleet-street and the City of London that fine morning.

"Father," said young Jerry, as they walked along; taking care to keep at arm's length and to have the stool well between them: "What's a Resurrection-Man?"

Mr. Cruncher came to a stop on the pavement before he answered, "How should I know?"

"I thought you knowed everything, father," said the artless boy.

"Hem! Well," returned Mr. Cruncher, going on again, and lifting off his hat to give his spikes free play, "he's a tradesman."

"What's his goods, father?" asked the brisk Young Jerry.

"His goods," said Mr. Cruncher, after turning it over in his mind, "is a branch of Scientific goods."

"Persons' bodies, ain't it, father?" asked the lively boy.

"I believe it is something of that sort," said Mr. Cruncher.

"Oh, father, I should so like to be a Resurrection-Man when I'm quite growed up!"

Mr. Cruncher was sothed, but shook his head in a

dubious and moral way. "It depends upon how you develop your talents. Be careful to develop your talents, and never to say no more than you can help to nobody, and there's no telling at the present time what you may not come to be fit for." As Young Jerry, thus encouraged, went on a few yards in advance, to plant the stool in the shadow of the Bar, Mr. Cruncher added to himself: "Jerry, you honest tradesman, there's hopes wot that boy will yet be a blessing to you, and a recompense to you, for his mother!"

CHAPTER XV.

Knitting.

THERE had been earlier drinking than usual in the wine-shop of Monsieur Defarge. As early as six o'clock in the morning, sallow faces peeping through its barred windows had descried other faces within, bending over measures of wine. Monsieur Defarge sold a very thin wine at the best of times, but it would seem to have been an unusually thin wine that he sold at this time. A sour wine, moreover, or a souring, for its influence on the mood of those who drank it was to make them gloomy. No vivacious Bacchanalian flame leaped out of the pressed grape of Monsieur Defarge: but, a smouldering fire that burnt in the dark, lay hidden in the dregs of it.

This had been the third morning in succession, on which there had been early drinking at the wine-shop of Monsieur Defarge. It had begun on Monday, and here was Wednesday come. There had been more of early brooding than drinking; for, many men had listened and whispered and slunk about there from the time of the opening of the door, who could not have laid a piece of money on the counter to save their souls. These were to the full as interested in the place, however, as if they could have commanded whole barrels of wine; and they glided from seat to seat, and from corner to corner, swallowing talk in lieu of drink, with greedy looks.

Notwithstanding an unusual flow of company, the master of the wine-shop was not visible. He was not missed; for, nobody who crossed the threshold looked for him, nobody asked for him, nobody wondered to see only Madame Defarge in her seat, presiding over the distribution of wine, with a bowl of battered small coins before her, as much defaced and beaten out of their original impress as the small coinage of humanity from whose ragged pockets they had come.

A suspended interest and a prevalent absence of mind,

were perhaps observed by the spies who looked in at the wine-shop, as they looked in at every place, high and low, from the king's palace to the criminal's goal. Games at cards languished, players at dominoes musingly built towers with them, drinkers drew figures on the tables with spilt drops of wine, Madame Defarge herself picked out the pattern on her sleeve with her toothpick, and saw and heard something inaudible and invisible a long way off.

Thus, Saint Antoine in this vinous feature of his, until midday. It was high noontide, when two dusty men passed through his streets and under his swinging lamps: of whom, one was Monsieur Defarge: the other, a mender of roads in a blue cap. All adust and athirst, the two entered the wine-shop. Their arrival had lighted a kind of fire in the breast of Saint Antoine, fast spreading as they came along, which stirred and flickered in flames of faces at most doors and windows. Yet, no one had followed them, and no man spoke when they entered the wine-shop, though the eyes of every man there were turned upon them.

"Good day, gentlemen!" said Monsieur Defarge.

It may have been a signal for loosening the general tongue. It elicited an answering chorus of "Good day!"

"It is bad weather, gentlemen," said Defarge, shaking his head.

Upon which, every man looked at his neighbour, and then all cast down their eyes and sat silent. Except one man, who got up and went out.

"My wife," said Defarge aloud, addressing Madame Defarge; "I have travelled certain leagues with this good mender of roads, called Jacques. I met him—by accident—a day and a half's journey out of Paris. He is a good child, this mender of roads, called Jacques. Give him to drink, my wife!"

A second man got up and went out. Madame Defarge set wine before the mender of roads called Jacques, who doffed his blue cap to the company, and drank. In the breast of his blouse, he carried some coarse dark bread; he ate of this between whiles, and sat munching and drinking near Madame Defarge's counter. A third man got up and went out.

Defarge refreshed himself with a draught of wine—but, he took less than was given to the stranger, as being himself a man to whom it was no rarity—and stood waiting until the countryman had made his breakfast. He looked at no one present, and now no one looked at him; not even Madame Defarge, who had taken up her knitting, and was at work.

"Have you finished your repast, friend?" he asked, in due season.

"Yes, thank you."

"Come then! You shall see the apartment that I told you you could occupy. It will suit you to a marvel."

Out of the wine-shop into the street, out of the street into a court-yard, out of the court-yard up a steep staircase, out of the staircase into a garret—formerly the garret where a white-haired man sat on a low bench, stooping forward and very busy making shoes.

No white-haired man was there now; but the three men were there who had gone out of the wine-shop singly. And between them and the white-haired man afar off, was the one small link, that they had once looked in at him through the chinks in the wall.

Defarge closed the door carefully, and spoke in a subdued voice:

"Jacques One, Jacques Two, Jacques Three! This is the witness encountered by appointment, by me, Jacques Four. He will tell you all. Speak, Jacques Five!"

The mender of roads, blue cap in hand, wiped his swarthy forehead with it, and said, "Where shall I commence, monsieur?"

"Commence," was Monsieur Defarge's not unreasonable reply, "at the commencement."

"I saw him then, messieurs," began the mender of roads, "a year ago this running summer, underneath the carriage of the Marquis, hanging by the chain. Behold the manner of it. I leaving my work on the road, the sun going to bed, the carriage of the Marquis slowly ascending the hill, he hanging by the chain—like this."

Again the mender of roads went through the old performance; in which he ought to have been perfect by that time, seeing that it had been the infallible resource and indispensable entertainment of his village during a whole year.

Jacques One struck in, and asked if he had ever seen the man before?

"Never," answered the mender of roads, recovering his perpendicular.

Jacques Three demanded how he afterwards recognised him then?

"By his tall figure," said the mender of roads, softly, and with his finger at his nose. "When Monsieur the Marquis demands that evening, 'Say, what is he like?' I make response, 'Tall as a spectre.'"

"You should have said, short as a dwarf," returned Jacques Two.

"But what did I know! The deed was not then ac-

completed, neither did he confide in me. Observe! Under those circumstances even, I do not offer my testimony. Monsieur the Marquis indicates me with his finger, standing near our little fountain, and says, 'To me! Ering that rascal!' My faith, messieurs, I offer nothing."

"He is right there, Jacques," murmured Defarge, to him who had interrupted. "Go on!"

"Good!" said the mender of roads, with an air of mystery. "The tall man is lost, and he is sought—how many months? Nine, ten, eleven?"

"No matter, the number," said Defarge. "He is well hidden, but at last he is unluckily found. Go on!"

"I am again at work upon the hill-side, and the sun is again about to go to bed. I am collecting my tools to descend to my cottage down in the village below, where it is already dark, when I raise my eyes, and see coming over the hill, six soldiers. In the midst of them is a tall man with his arms bound—tied to his sides, like this!"

With the aid of his indispensable cap, he represented a man with his elbows bound fast at his hips, with cords that were knotted behind him.

"I stand aside messieurs, by my heap of stones, to see the soldiers and their prisoner pass (for it is a solitary road, that, where any spectacle is well worth looking at), and at first, as they approach, I see no more than that they are six soldiers with a tall man bound, and that they are almost black to my sight—except on the side of the sun going to bed, where they have a red edge, messieurs. Also, I see that their long shadows are on the hollow ridge on the opposite side of the road, and are on the hill above it, and are like the shadows of giants. Also, I see that they are covered with dust, and that the dust moves with them as they come, tramp, tramp! But when they advance quite near to me, I recognise the tall man, and he recognises me. Ah, but he would be well content to precipitate himself over the hill-side once again, as on the evening when he and I first encountered, close to the same spot!"

He described it as if he were there, and it was evident that he saw it vividly; perhaps he had not seen much in his life.

"I do not show the soldiers that I recognise the tall man; he does not show the soldiers that he recognises me; we do it, and we know it, with our eyes. 'Come on!' says the chief of that company, pointing to the village, 'bring him fast to his tomb!' and they bring him faster. I follow. His arms are swelled because of being bound so tight, his wooden shoes are large and clumsy,

and he is lame. Because he is lame, and consequently slow, they drive him with their guns—like this !”

He imitated the action of a man's being impelled forward by the butt-ends of muskets.

“As they descend the hill like madmen running a race, he falls. They laugh, and pick him up again. His face is bleeding and covered with dust, but he cannot touch it ; thereupon they laugh again. They bring him into the village ; all the village runs to look ; they take him past the mill, and up to the prison ; all the village sees the prison gate open in the darkness of the night, and swallow him—like this !”

He opened his mouth as wide as he could, and shut it with a sounding snap of his teeth. Observant of his unwillingness to mar the effect by opening it again, Defarge said, “Go on, Jacques.”

“All the village,” pursued the mender of roads, on tiptoe and in a low voice, “withdraws ; all the village whispers by the fountain ; all the village sleeps ; all the village dreams of that unhappy one, within the locks and bars of the prison on the crag, and never to come out of it, expect to perish. In the morning, with my tools upon my shoulder, eating my morsel of black bread as I go, I made a circuit by the prison, on my way to my work. There, I see him, high up, behind the bars of a lofty iron cage, bloody and dusty as last night, looking through. He has no hand free, to wave to me ; I dare not call to him ; he regards me like a dead man.”

Defarge and the three glanced darkly at one another. The looks of all of them were dark, repressed, and revengeful, as they listened to the countryman's story ; the manner of all of them, while it was secret was authoritative too. They had the air of a rough tribunal ; Jacques One and Two sitting on the old pallet-bed, each with his chin resting on his hand, and his eyes intent on the road mender ; Jacques Three, equally intent, on one knee behind them, with his agitated hand always gliding over the network of fine nerves about his mouth, and nose ; Defarge standing between them and the narrator, whom he had stationed in the light of the window, by turns looking from him to them, and from them to him.

“Go on, Jacques,” said Defarge.

“He remains up there in his iron cage, some days. The village looks at him by stealth, for it is afraid. But it always looks up, from a distance, at the prison on the crag ; and in the evening when the work of the day is achieved and it assembles to gossip at the fountain, all faces are turned towards the prison. Formerly, they were turned towards the posting-house ; now, they are turned towards the prison. They whisper at the fountain that although condemned to death he will not be executed ;

they say that petitions have been presented in Paris, showing that he was enraged and made mad by the death of his child; they say that a petition has been presented to the King himself. What do I know? It is possible. Perhaps yes, perhaps no."

"Listen then, Jacques," Number One of that name sternly interposed. "Know that a petition was presented to the King and Queen. All here, yourself excepted, saw the King take it, in his carriage in the street, sitting beside the Queen. It is Defarge whom you see here, who, at the hazard of his life, darted out before the horses, with the petition in his hand."

"And once again listen, Jacques!" said the kneeling Number Three: his fingers ever wandering over and over those fine nerves, with a strikingly greedy air, as if he hungered for something—that was neither food nor drink; "the guard, horse and foot, surrounded the the petitioner, and struck him blows. You hear?"

"I hear, messieurs."

"Go on then," said Defarge.

"Again; on the other hand, they whisper at the fountain," resumed the countryman, "that he is brought down into our country to be executed on the spot, and that he will very certainly be executed. They even whisper that because he has slain Monseigneur, and because Monseigneur was the father of his tenants—serfs—what you will—he will be executed as a parricide. One old man says at the fountain, that his right hand, armed with the knife, will be burnt off before his face; that, into wounds which will be made in his arms, his breast, and his legs, there will be poured boiling oil, melted lead, hot resin, wax, and sulphur; finally, that he will be torn limb from limb by four strong horses. That old man says, all this was actually done to a prisoner who made an attempt on the life of the last King, Louis Fifteen. But how do I know if he lies? I am not a scholar."

"Listen once again then, Jacques!" said the man with the restless hand and the craving air. "The name of that prisoner was Damiens, and it was all done in open day, in the open streets of this city of Paris; and nothing was more noticed in the vast concourse that saw it done, than the crowd of ladies of quality and fashion, who were full of eager attention to the last—to the last, Jacques, prolonged until nightfall, when he had lost two legs, and an arm, and still breathed! And it was done—why, how old are you?"

"Thirty-five," said the mender of roads, who looked sixty.

"It was done when you were more than ten years old: you might have seen it."

"Enough!" said Defarge, with grim impatience. "Long live the Devil! Go on."

"Well! Some whisper this, some whisper that; they speak of nothing else; even the fountain appears to fall to that tune. At length, on Sunday night when all the village is asleep, come soldiers, winding down from the prison, and their guns ring on the stones of the little street. Workmen dig, workmen hammer, soldiers laugh and sing; in the morning, by the fountain, there is raised a gallows forty feet high, poisoning the water."

The mender of roads looked *through* rather than *at* the low ceiling, and pointed as if he saw the gallows somewhere in the sky.

"All work is stopped, all assemble there, nobody leads the cows out, the cows are there with the rest. At mid-day, the roll of drums. Soldiers have marched into the prison in the night, and he is in the midst of many soldiers. He is bound as before, and in his mouth there is a gag—tied so, with a tight string, making him look almost as if he laughed." He suggested it, by creasing his face with his two thumbs, from the corners of his mouth to his ears. "On the top of the gallows is fixed the knife, blade upwards, with its point in the air. He is hanged there forty feet high—and is left hanging, poisoning the water."

They looked at one another, as he used his blue cap to wipe his face, on which the perspiration had started afresh while he recalled the spectacle.

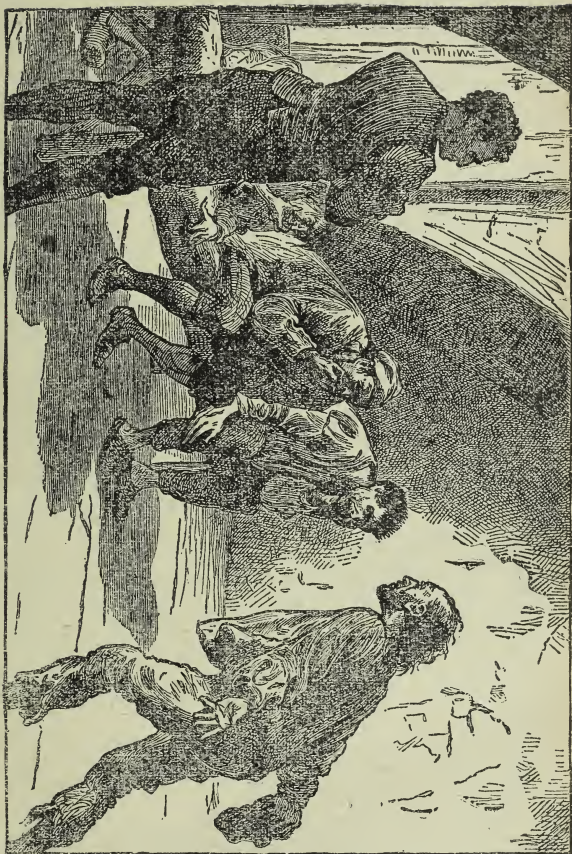
"It is frightful, messieurs. How can the women and the children draw water! Who can gossip of an evening, under that shadow! Under it, have I said? When I left the village, Monday evening as the sun was going to bed, and looked back from the hill, the shadow struck across the church, across the mill, across the prison—seemed to strike across the earth, messieurs, to where the sky rests upon it!"

The hungry man gnawed one of his fingers as he looked at the other three, and his finger quivered with the craving that was on him.

"That's all, messieurs. I left at sunset (as I had been warned to do), and I walked on, that night and half next day, until I met (as I was warned I should) this comrade. With him, I came on, now riding and now walking, through the rest of yesterday and through last night. And here you see me!"

After a gloomy silence, the first Jacques said, "Good! You have acted and recounted, faithfully. Will you wait for us a little, outside the door?"

"Very willingly," said the mender of roads. Whom Defarge escorted to the top of the stairs, and, leaving seated there, returned.



"IT IS FRIGHTFUL, MESSIEURS. HOW CAN THE WOMEN AND CHILDREN DRAW WATER?"

—A Tale of Two Cities, Vol. Eleven, page 151.

The three had risen, and their heads were together when he came back to the garret.

"How say you, Jacques?" demanded Number One. "To be registered?"

"To be registered, as doomed to destruction," returned Defarge.

"Magnificent!" croaked the man with the craving.

"The château, and all the race!" inquired the first.

"The château and all the race," returned Defarge. "Extermination."

The hungry man repeated, in a rapturous croak, "Magnificent!" and began gnawing another finger.

"Are you sure," asked Jacques Two, of Defarge, "that no embarrassment can arise from our manner of keeping the register? Without doubt it is safe, for no one beyond ourselves can decipher it; but shall we always be able to decipher it—or, I ought to say, will she?"

"Jacques," returned Defarge, drawing himself up, "if madame my wife undertook to keep the register in her memory alone, she would not lose a word of it—not a syllable of it. Knitted, in her own stitches, and her own symbols, it will always be as plain to her as the sun. Confide in Madame Defarge. It would be easier for the weakest poltroon that lives, to erase himself from existence, than to erase one letter of his name or crimes from the knitted register of Madame Defarge."

There was a murmur of confidence and approval, and then the man who hungered, asked: "Is this rustic to be sent back soon? I hope so. He is very simple; is he not a little dangerous?"

"He knows nothing," said Defarge; "at least nothing more than would easily elevate himself to a gallows of the same height. I charge myself with him; let him remain with me; I will take care of him, and set him on his road. He wishes to see the fine world—the King, the Queen, and Court: let him see them on Sunday."

"What?" exclaimed the hungry man, staring. "Is it a good sign, that he wishes to see Royalty and Nobility?"

"Jacques," said Defarge; "judiciously show a cat, milk, if you wish her to thirst for it. Judiciously show a dog his natural prey, if you wish him to bring it down one day."

Nothing more was said, and the mender of roads, being found already dozing on the topmost stair, was advised to lay himself down on the pallet-bed and take some rest. He needed no persuasion, and was soon asleep.

Worse quarters than Defarge's wine-shop, could easily have been found in Paris for a provincial slave of that degree. Saving for a mysterious dread of madame by which he was constantly haunted, his life was very new

and agreeable. But, madame sat all day at her counter, so expressly unconscious of him and so particularly determined not to perceive that his being there had any connexion with anything below the surface, that he shook in his wooden shoes whenever his eye lighted on her. For, he contended with himself that it was impossible to foresee what that lady might pretend next: and he felt assured that if she should take it into her brightly ornamented head to pretend that she had seen him do a murder and afterwards flay the victim, she would infallibly go through with it until the play was played out.

Therefore, when Sunday came, the mender of roads was not enchanted (though he said he was) to find that madame was to accompany monsieur and himself to Versailles. It was additionally disconcerting to have madame knitting all the way there, in a public conveyance; it was additionally disconcerting yet, to have madame in the crowd in the afternoon, still with her knitting in her hands as the crowd waited to see the carriage of the King and Queen.

“You work hard, madame,” said a man near her.

“Yes,” answered Madame Defarge; “I have a good deal to do.”

“What do you make, madame?”

“Many things.”

“For instance—”

“For instance,” returned Madame Defarge, composedly, “shrouds.”

The man moved a little further away, as soon as he could, and the mender of roads fanned himself with his blue cap: feeling it mightily close and oppressive. If he needed a King and Queen to restore him, he was fortunate in having his remedy at hand; for, soon the large-faced King and the fair-faced Queen came in their golden coach, attended by the shining Bull's Eye of their Court, a glittering multitude of laughing ladies and fine lords; and in jewels and silks and powder and splendour and elegantly spurning figures and handsomely disdainful faces of both sexes, the mender of roads bathed himself, so much to his temporary intoxication, that he cried Long live the King, Long live the Queen, Long live everybody and everything! as if he had never heard of ubiquitous Jacques in his time. Then, there were gardens, courtyards, terraces, fountains, green banks, more King and Queen, more Bull's Eye, more lords and ladies, more Long live they all! until he absolutely wept with sentiment. During the whole of this scene, which lasted some three hours, he had plenty of shouting and weeping and sentimental company, and throughout Defarge held him by the collar, as if to restrain him from flying

at the objects of his brief devotion and tearing them to pieces.

“Bravo!” said Defarge, clapping him on the back when it was over, like a patron; “you are a good boy!”

The mender of roads was now coming to himself, and was mistrustful of having made a mistake in his late demonstrations; but no.

“You are the fellow we want,” said Defarge in his ear; “you make these fools believe that it will last for ever. Then, they are the more insolent, and it is the nearer ended.”

“Hey!” cried the mender of roads, reflectively; “that’s true.”

“These fools know nothing. While they despise your breath, and would stop it for ever and ever, in you or in a hundred like you rather than in one of their own horses or dogs, they only know what your breath tells them. Let it deceive them, then, a little longer; it cannot deceive them too much.”

Madame Defarge looked superciliously at the client, and nodded in confirmation.

“As to you,” said she, “you would shout and shed tears for anything, if it made a show and a noise. Say! Would you not?”

“Truly, madame, I think so. For the moment.”

“If you were shown a great heap of dolls, and were set upon them to pluck them to pieces and despoil them for your own advantage, you would pick out the richest and gayest. Say! Would you not?”

“Truly yes, madame.”

“Yes. And if you were shown a flock of birds, unable to fly, and were set upon them to strip them of their feathers for your own advantage, you would set upon the birds of the finest feathers; would you not?”

“It is true, madame.”

“You have seen both dolls and birds to-day,” said Madame Defarge, with a wave of her hand towards the place where they had last been apparent; “now go home!”

CHAPTER XVI.

Still Knitting.

MADAME DEFARGE and monsieur her husband returned amicably to the bosom of Saint Antoine, while a speck in a blue cap toiled through the darkness, and through the dust, and down the weary miles of avenue by the wayside, slowly tending towards that point of the com-

pass where the château of Monsieur the Marquis, now in his grave, listened to the whispering trees. Such ample leisure had the stone faces, now, for listening to the trees and to the fountain, that the few village scarecrows who, in their quest for herbs to eat and fragments of dead stick to burn, strayed within sight of the great stone court-yard and terrace staircase, had it borne in upon their starved fancy that the expression of the faces was altered. A rumour just lived in the village—had a faint and bare existence there, as its people had—that when the knife struck home, the faces changed, from faces of pride to faces of anger and pain; also, that when that dangling figure was hauled up forty feet above the fountain, they changed again, and bore a cruel look of being avenged, which they would henceforth bear for ever. In the stone face over the great window of the bedchamber where the murder was done, two fine dints were pointed out in the sculptured nose, which everybody recognised, and which nobody had seen of old; and on the scarce occasions when two or three ragged peasants emerged from the crowd to take a hurried peep at Monsieur the Marquis petrified, a skinny finger would not have pointed to it for a minute, before they all started away among the moss and leaves, like the more fortunate hares who could find a living there.

Château and hut, stone face and dangling figure, the red stain on the stone floor, and the pure water in the village well—thousands of acres of land—a whole province of France—all France itself—lay under the night sky, concentrated into a faint hair-breadth line. So does a whole world with all its greatness and littleness, lie in a twinkling star. And as mere human knowledge can split a ray of light and analyse the manner of its composition, so, sublimer intelligences may read in the feeble shining of this earth of ours, every thought and act, every vice and virtue, of every responsible creature on it.

The Defarges, husband and wife, came lumbering under the starlight, in their public vehicle, to that gate of Paris whereunto their journey naturally tended. There was the usual stoppage at the barrier guard-house, and the usual lanterns came glancing forth for the usual examination and inquiry. Monsieur Defarge alighted: knowing one or two of the soldiery there, and one of the police. The latter he was intimate with, and affectionately embraced.

When Saint Antoine had again enfolded the Defarges in his dusky wings, and they having finally alighted near the Saint's boundaries, were picking their way on foot through the black mud and offal of his streets, Madame Defarge spoke to her husband:



SAINTE ANTOINE.

—A Tale of Two Cities, Vol. Eleven, page 156.

“ Say then, my friend : what did Jacques of the police tell thee ? ”

“ Very little to-night, but all he knows. There is another spy commissioned for our quarter. There may be many more, for all that he can say, but he knows of one.”

“ Eh well ! ” said Madame Defarge, raising her eyebrows with a cool business air. “ It is necessary to register him. How do they call that man ? ”

“ He is English.”

“ So much the better. His name ? ”

“ Barsad,” said Defarge, making it French by pronunciation. But, he had been so careful to get it accurately, that he then spelt it with perfect correctness.

“ Barsad,” repeated Madame. “ Good. Christian name ? ”

“ John.”

“ John Barsad,” repeated madame, after murmuring it once to herself. “ Good. His appearance ; is it known ? ”

“ Age, about forty years ; height, about five feet nine ; black hair ; complexion dark ; generally, rather handsome visage ; eyes dark, face thin, long, and sallow ; nose aquiline, but not straight, having a peculiar inclination towards the left cheek ; expression, therefore, sinister.”

“ Eh my faith. It is a portrait ! ” said madame, laughing. “ He shall be registered to-morrow.”

They turned into the wine-shop, which was closed (for it was midnight), and where Madame Defarge immediately took her post at the desk, counted the small moneys that had been taken during her absence, examined the stock, went through the entries in the book, made other entries of her own, checked the serving man in every possible way, and finally dismissed him to bed. Then she turned out the contents of the bowl of money for the second time, and began knotting them up in her handkerchief, in a chain of separate knots, for safe keeping through the night. All this while, Defarge, with his pipe in his mouth, walked up and down, complacently admiring, but never interfering ; in which condition indeed, as to the business and his domestic affairs, he walked up and down through life.

The night was hot, and the shop, close-shut and surrounded by so foul a neighbourhood, was ill-smelling. Monsieur Defarge’s olfactory sense was by no means delicate, but the stock of wine smelt much stronger than it ever tasted, and so did the stock of rum and brandy and aniseed. He whiffed the compound of scents away, as he put down his smoked-out pipe.

“ You are fatigued,” said madame, raising her glance

as she knotted the money. "There are only the usual odours."

"I am a little tired," her husband acknowledged.

"You are a little depressed, too," said madame, whose quick eyes had never been so intent on the accounts, but they had had a ray or two for him. "Oh, the men, the men!"

"But my dear," began Defarge.

"But my dear!" repeated madame, nodding firmly: "but my dear! You are faint of heart to-night, my dear!"

"Well, then," said Defarge, as if a thought were wrung out of his breast, "it *is* a long time."

"It is a long time," repeated his wife; "and when is it not a long time? Vengeance and retribution require a long time; it is the rule."

"It does not take a long time to strike a man with Lightning," said Defarge.

"How long," demanded the madame, composedly, "does it take to make and store the lightning? Tell me?"

Defarge raised his head thoughtfully, as if there were something in that, too.

"It does not take a long time," said madame, "for an earthquake to swallow a town. Eh well! Tell me how long it takes to prepare the earthquake?"

"A long time, I suppose," said Defarge.

"But when it is ready, it takes place, and grinds to pieces everything before it. In the mean time, it is always preparing, though it is not seen or heard. That is your consolation. Keep it."

She tied a knot with flashing eyes, as if it throttled a foe.

"I tell thee," said madame, extending her right hand, for emphasis, "that although it is a long time on the road, it is on the road and coming. I tell thee it never retreats, and never stops. I tell thee it is always advancing. Look around and consider the lives of all the world that we know, consider the faces of all the world that we know, consider the rage and discontent to which the *Jacquerie* addresses itself with more and more of certainty every hour. Can such things last? Bah! I mock you."

"My brave wife," returned Defarge, standing before her with his head a little bent, and his hands clasped at his back, like a docile and attentive pupil before his catechist, "I do not question all this. But it has lasted a long time, and it is possible—you know well, my wife, it is possible—that it may not come, during our lives."

"Eh well! How then?" demanded madame, tying another knot, as if there were another enemy strangled.

“Well!” said Defarge with a half complaining and half apologetic shrug. “We shall not see the triumph.”

“We shall have helped it,” returned madame, with her extended hand in strong action. “Nothing that we do, is done in vain. I believe, with all my soul, that we shall see the triumph. But even if not, even if I knew certainly not, show me the neck of an aristocrat and tyrant, and still I would—”

There madame with her teeth set, tied a very terrible knot indeed.

“Hold!” cried Defarge, reddening a little as if he felt charged with cowardice; “I too, my dear, will stop at nothing.”

“Yes! But it is your weakness that you sometimes need to see your victim and your opportunity, to sustain you. Sustain yourself without that. When the time comes, let loose a tiger and a devil; but wait for the time with the tiger and the devil chained—not shown—yet always ready.”

Madame enforced the conclusion of this piece of advice by striking her little counter with her chain of money as if she knocked its brains out, and then gathering the heavy handkerchief under her arm in a serene manner, and observing that it was time to go to bed.

Next noontide saw the admirable woman in her usual place in the wine-shop, knitting away assiduously. A rose lay beside her, and if she now and then glanced at the flower, it was with no infraction of her usual pre-occupied air. There were a few customers, drinking or not drinking, standing or seated, sprinkled about. The day was very hot, and heaps of flies, who were extending their inquisitive and adventurous perquisitions into all the glutinous little glasses near madame, fell dead at the bottom. Their decease made no impression on the other flies out promenading, who looked at them in the coolest manner (as if they themselves were elephants, or something as far removed), until they met the same fate. Curious to consider how heedless flies are!—perhaps they thought as much at Court that sunny summer day.

A figure entering at the door threw a shadow on Madame Defarge which she felt to be a new one. She laid down her knitting, and began to pin her rose in her head-dress, before she looked at the figure.

It was curious. The moment Madame Defarge took up the rose, the customers ceased talking, and began gradually to drop out of the wine-shop.

“Good day, madame,” said the new comer.

“Good day, monsieur.”

She said it aloud, but added to herself, as she resumed her knitting: “Hah! Good day, age about forty, height

about five feet nine, black hair, generally rather handsome visage, complexion dark, eyes dark, thin long and sallow face, aquiline nose but not straight, having a peculiar inclination towards the left cheek which imparts a sinister expression ! Good day, one and all !”

“Have the goodness to give me a little glass of old cognac, and a mouthful of cool fresh water, madame !”

Madame complied with a polite air.

“Marvellous cognac this, madame !”

It was the first time it had ever been so complimented, and Madame Defarge knew enough of its antecedents to know better. She said, however, that the cognac was flattered, and took up her knitting. The visitor watched her fingers for a few moments, and took the opportunity of observing the place in general.

“You knit with great skill, madame.”

“I am accustomed to it.”

“A pretty pattern too !”

“*You* think so ?” said madame, looking at him with a smile.

“Decidedly. May one ask what it is for ?”

“Pastime,” said madame, looking at him with a smile, while her fingers moved nimbly.

“Not for use ?”

“That depends. I may find a use for it, one day. If I do—well,” said madame, drawing a breath and nodding her head with a stern kind of coquetry, “I’ll use it !”

It was remarkable ; but, the taste of Saint Antoine seemed to be decidedly opposed to a rose on the head-dress of Madame Defarge. Two men had entered separately, and had been about to order drink, when, catching sight of that novelty, they faltered, made a pretence of looking about as if for some friend who was not there, and went away. Nor, of those who had been there when this visitor entered, was there one left. They had all dropped off. The spy had kept his eyes open, but had been able to detect no sign. They had lounged away in a poverty-stricken, purposeless, accidental manner, quite natural and unimpeachable.

“JOHN,” thought madame, checking off her work as her fingers knitted, and her eyes looked at the stranger. “stay long enough, and I shall knit ‘BARSAD’ before you go.”

“You have a husband, madame ?”

“I have.”

“Children ?”

“No children.”

“Business seems bad ?”

“Business is very bad ; the people are so poor.”

“Ah the unfortunate, miserable people ! So oppressed too—as you say.”

“As you say,” madame retorted, correcting him, and deftly knitting an extra something into his name that boded him no good.

“Pardon me; certainly it was I who said so, but you naturally think so. Of course.”

“I think?” returned madame, in a high voice. “I and my husband have enough to do to keep this wine-shop open, without thinking. All we think, here, is, how to live. That is the subject *we* think of, and it gives us, from morning to-night, enough to think about, without embarrassing our heads concerning others. I think for others? No, no.”

The spy, who was there to pick up any crumbs he could find or make, did not allow his baffled state to express itself in his sinister face; but, stood with an air of gossiping gallantry, leaning his elbow on Madame Defarge’s little counter, and occasionally sipping his cognac.

“A bad business this, madame, of Gaspard’s execution. Ah! the poor Gaspard!” With a sigh of great compassion.

“My faith!” returned madame, coolly and lightly, “if people use knives for such purposes, they have to pay for it. He knew beforehand what the price of his luxury was; he has paid the price.”

“I believe,” said the spy, dropping his soft voice to a tone that invited confidence, and expressing an injured revolutionary susceptibility in every muscle of his wicked face; “I believe there is much compassion and anger in this neighbourhood, touching the poor fellow? Between ourselves.”

“Is there?” asked madame, vacantly.

“Is there not?”

“—Here is my husband!” said Madame Defarge.

As the keeper of the wine-shop entered at the door, the spy saluted him by touching his hat, and saying, with an engaging smile, “Good day, Jacques!” Defarge stopped short, and stared at him.

“Good day, Jacques!” the spy repeated; with not quite so much confidence, or quite so easy a smile under the stare.

“You deceive yourself, monsieur,” returned the keeper of the wine-shop. “You mistake me for another. That is not my name. I am Ernest Defarge.”

“It is all the same,” said the spy, airily, but discomfited too: “good day!”

“Good day!” answered Defarge, dryly.

“I was saying to madame, with whom I had the pleasure of chatting when you entered, that they tell me there is—and no wonder!—much sympathy and anger in Saint Antoine, touching the unhappy fate of poor Gaspard.”

"No one has told me so," said Defarge, shaking his head. "I know nothing of it."

Having said it, he passed behind the little counter, and stood with his hand on the back of his wife's chair, looking over that barrier at the person to whom they were both opposed, and whom either of them would have shot with the greatest satisfaction.

The spy, well used to his business, did not change his unconscious attitude, but drained his little glass of cognac, took a sip of fresh water, and asked for another glass of cognac. Madame Defarge poured it out for him, took to her knitting again, and hummed a little song over it.

"You seem to know this quarter well; that is to say, better than I do?" observed Defarge.

"Not at all, but I hope to know it better. I am so profoundly interested in its miserable inhabitants."

"Hah!" muttered Defarge.

"The pleasure of conversing with you, Monsieur Defarge, recalls to me," pursued the spy, "that I have the honour of cherishing some interesting associations with your name."

"Indeed?" said Defarge, with much indifference.

"Yes indeed. When Doctor Manette was released, you his old domestic had the charge of him, I know. He was delivered to you. You see I am informed of the circumstances?"

"Such is the fact, certainly," said Defarge. He had had it conveyed to him, in an accidental touch of his wife's elbow as she knitted and warbled, that he would do best to answer, but always with brevity.

"It was to you," said the spy, "that his daughter came; and it was from your care that his daughter took him, accompanied by a neat brown monsieur; how is he called?—in a little wig—Lorry—of the bank of Tellson and Company—over to England."

"Such is the fact," repeated Defarge.

"Very interesting remembrances!" said the spy. "I have known Doctor Manette and his daughter, in England."

"Yes," said Defarge.

"You don't hear much about them now," said the spy.

"No," said Defarge.

"In effect," madame struck in, looking up from her work and her little song, "we never hear about them. We received the news of their safe arrival, and perhaps another letter or perhaps two; but since then, they have gradually taken their road in life—we, ours—and we have held no correspondence."

“Perfectly so, madame,” replied the spy. “She is going to be married.”

“Going?” echoed madame. “She was pretty enough to have been married long ago. You English are cold, it seems to me.”

“Oh! You know I am English?”

“I perceive your tongue is,” returned madame. “and what the tongue is, I suppose the man is.”

He did not take the identification as a compliment; but, he made the best of it, and turned it off with a laugh. After sipping his cognac to the end, he added:

“Yes, Miss Manette is going to be married. But not to an Englishman; to one who, like herself, is French by birth. And speaking of Gaspard (ah, poor Gaspard! It was cruel, cruel!), it is a curious thing that she is going to marry the nephew of Monsieur the Marquis, for whom Gaspard was exalted to that height of so many feet; in other words, the present Marquis. But he lives unknown in England, he is no Marquis there; he is Mr. Charles Darnay. D’Aulnais is the name of his mother’s family.”

Madame Defarge knitted steadily, but the intelligence had a palpable effect upon her husband. Do what he would, behind the little counter, as to the striking of a light and the lighting of his pipe, he was troubled, and his hand was not trustworthy. The spy would have been no spy if he had failed to see it, or to record it in his mind.

Having made, at least, this one hit, whatever it might prove to be worth, and no customers coming in to help him to any other, Mr. Barsad paid for what he had drunk, and took his leave: taking occasion to say, in a genteel manner, before he departed, that he looked forward to the pleasure of seeing Monsieur and Madame Defarge again. For some minutes after he had emerged into the outer presence of Saint Antoine, the husband and wife remained exactly as he had left them, lest he should come back.

“Can it be true,” said Defarge, in a low voice, looking down at his wife as he stood smoking with his hand on the back of her chair: “what he has said of Ma’am-selle Manette?”

“As he has said it,” returned madame, lifting her eyebrows a little, “it is probably false. But it may be true.”

“If it is—” Defarge began; and stopped.

“If it is?” repeated his wife.

“—And if it does come while we live to see it triumph—I hope, for her sake, Destiny will keep her husband out of France.”

“Her husband’s destiny,” said Madame Defarge, with

her usual composure, "will take him where he is to go, and will lead him to the end that is to end him. That is all I know."

"But it is very strange—now, at least is it not very strange"—said Defarge, rather pleading with his wife to induce her to admit it, "that, after all our sympathy for Monsieur her father and herself, her husband's name should be proscribed under your hand at this moment, by the side of that infernal dog's who has just left us?"

"Stranger things than that, will happen when it does come," answered madame. "I have them both here of a certainty; and they are both here for their merits; that is enough."

She rolled up her knitting when she had said those words, and presently took the rose out of the handkerchief that was wound about her head. Either Saint Antoine had an instinctive sense that the objectionable decoration was gone, or Saint Antoine was on the watch for its disappearance; howbeit, the Saint took courage to lounge in, very shortly afterwards, and the wine-shop recovered its habitual aspect.

In the evening, at which season of all others, Saint Antoine turned himself inside out, and sat on door-steps and window-ledges, and came to the corners of vile streets and courts, for a breath of air, Madame Defarge with her work in her hand was accustomed to pass from place to place and from group to group: a Missionary—there were many like her—such as the world will do well never to breed again. All the women knitted. They knitted worthless things; but, the mechanical work was a mechanical substitute for eating and drinking; the hands moved for the jaws and the digestive apparatus; if the bony fingers had been still, the stomachs would have been more famine-pinched.

But, as the fingers went, the eyes went, and the thoughts. And as Madame Defarge moved on from group to group, all three went quicker and fiercer among every little knot of women that she had spoken with, and left behind.

Her husband smoked at his door, looking after her with admiration. "A great woman," said he, "a strong woman, a grand woman, a frightfully grand woman."

Darkness closed around, and then came the ringing of church bells and the distant beating of the military drums in the Faïence Court-Yard, as the women sat knitting, knitting. Darkness encompassed them. Another darkness was closing in as surely, when the church bells, then ringing pleasantly in many an airy steeple over France, should be melted into thundering cannon; when the military drums should be beating to drown a wretched voice, that night all potent as the voice of Power and

Plenty, Freedom and Life. So much was closing in about the women who sat knitting, knitting, that they their very selves were closing in around a structure yet unbuilt, where they were to sit knitting, knitting, counting dropping heads.

CHAPTER XVII

One Night.

NEVER did the sun go down with a brighter glory on the quiet corner in Soho, than one memorable evening when the Doctor and his daughter sat under the plane-tree together. Never did the moon rise with a milder radiance over great London, than on that night when it found them still seated under the tree, and shone upon their faces through its leaves.

Lucie was to be married to-morrow. She had reserved this last evening for her father, and they sat alone under the plane-tree.

“You are happy, my dear father?”

“Quite, my child.”

They had said little, though they had been there a long time. When it was yet light enough to work and read, she had neither engaged herself in her usual work, nor had she read to him. She had employed herself in both ways, at his side, under the tree, many and many a time; but, this time was not quite like any other, and nothing could make it so.

“And, I am very happy to-night, dear father. I am deeply happy in the love that Heaven has so blessed my love for Charles, and Charles’s love for me. But, if my life were not to be still consecrated to you, or if my marriage were so arranged as that it would part us, even by the length of a few of these streets, I should be more unhappy and self-reproachful now, than I can tell you. Even as it is—”

Even as it was, she could not command her voice.

In the sad moonlight, she clasped him by the neck, and laid her face upon his breast. In the moonlight which is always sad, as the light of the sun itself is—as the light called human life is—at its coming and its going.

“Dearest dear! Can you tell me, this last time, that you feel quite, quite sure, no new affections of mine, and no new duties of mine, will ever interpose between us? I know it well, but do you know it? In your own heart, do you feel quite certain?”

Her father answered, with a cheerful firmness of conviction he could scarcely have assumed, “Quite sure,

my darling! More than that," he added, as he tenderly kissed her: "my future is far brighter, Lucie, seen through your marriage, than it could have been—nay, than it ever was—without it."

"If I could hope *that*, my father!—"

"Believe it, love! Indeed it is so. Consider how natural and how plain it is, my dear, that it should be so. You, devoted and young, cannot fully appreciate the anxiety I have felt that your life should not be wasted—"

She moved her hand towards his lips, but he took it in his, and repeated the word.

"—wasted, my child—should not be wasted, struck aside from the natural order of things—for my sake. Your unselfishness cannot entirely comprehend how much my mind has gone on this; but, only ask yourself, how could my happiness be perfect, while yours was incomplete?"

"If I had never seen Charles, my father, I should have been quite happy with you."

He smiled at her unconscious admission that she would have been unhappy without Charles, having seen him; and replied:

"My child, you did see him, and it is Charles. If it had not been Charles, it would have been another. Or, if it had been no other, I should have been the cause, and then the dark part of my life would have cast its shadow beyond myself, and would have fallen on you."

It was the first time, except at the trial, of her ever hearing him refer to the period of his sufferings. It gave her a strange and new sensation while his words were in her ears; and she remembered it long afterwards.

"See!" said the Doctor of Beauvais, raising his hand towards the moon. "I have looked at her from my prison-window, when I could not bear her light. I have looked at her when it has been such torture to me to think of her shining upon what I had lost, that I have beaten my head against my prison walls. I have looked at her in a state so dulled and lethargic, that I have thought of nothing but the number of horizontal lines I could draw across her at the full, and the number of perpendicular lines with which I could intersect them." He added in his inward and pondering manner, as he looked at the moon, "It was twenty either way, I remember, and the twentieth was difficult to squeeze in."

The strange thrill with which she heard him go back to that time, deepened as he dwelt upon it; but, there was nothing to shock her in the manner of his reference.

He only seemed to contrast his present cheerfulness and felicity with the dire endurance that was over.

"I have looked at her, speculating thousands of times upon the unborn child from whom I had been rent. Whether it was alive. Whether it had been born alive, or the poor mother's shock had killed it. Whether it was a son who would some day avenge his father. (There was a time in my imprisonment, when my desire for vengeance was unbearable.) Whether it was a son who would never know his father's story; who might even live to weigh the possibility of his father's having disappeared of his own will and act. Whether it was a daughter, who would grow to be a woman."

She drew closer to him, and kissed his cheek and his hand.

"I have pictured my daughter, to myself, as perfectly forgetful of me—rather, altogether ignorant of me, and unconscious of me. I have cast up the years of her age, year after year. I have seen her married to a man who knew nothing of my fate. I have altogether perished from the remembrance of the living, and in the next generation my place was a blank."

"My father! Even to hear that you had such thoughts of a daughter who never existed, strikes to my heart as if I had been that child."

"You, Lucie? It is out of the consolation and restoration you have brought to me, that these remembrances arise, and pass between us and the moon on this last night.—What did I say, just now?"

"She knew nothing of you. She cared nothing for you."

"So! But on other moonlight nights, when the sadness and the silence have touched me in a different way—have affected me with something as like a sorrowful sense of peace, as any emotion that had pain for its foundations could—I have imagined her as coming to me in my cell, and leading me out into the freedom beyond the fortress. I have seen her image in the moonlight, often, as I now see you; except that I never held her in my arms; it stood between the little grated window and the door. But, you understand that that was not the child I am speaking of?"

"The figure was not; the—the—image; the fancy?"

"No. That was another thing. It stood before my disturbed sense of sight, but it never moved. The phantom that my mind pursued, was another and more real child. Of her outward appearance I know no more than that she was like her mother. The other had that likeness too—as you have—but was not the same. Can you follow me, Lucie? Hardly, I think? I doubt you

must have been a solitary prisoner to understand these perplexed distinctions."

His collected and calm manner could not prevent her blood from running cold, as he thus tried to anatomise his old condition.

"In that more peaceful state, I have imagined her, in the moonlight, coming to me and taking me out to show me that the home of her married life was full of her loving remembrance of her lost father. My picture was in her room, and I was in her prayers. Her life was active, cheerful, useful; but my poor history pervaded it all."

"I was that child, my father. I was not half so good but in my love that was I."

"And she showed me her children," said the Doctor of Beauvais, "and they had heard of me, and had been taught to pity me. When they passed a prison of the State, they kept far from its frowning walls, and looked up at its bars, and spoke in whispers. She could never deliver me; I imagined that she always brought me back after showing me such things. But then, blessed with the relief of tears, I fell upon my knees, and blessed her."

"I am that child, I hope, my father. O my dear, my dear, will you bless me as fervently to-morrow?"

"Lucie, I recal these old troubles in the reason that I have to-night for loving you better than words can tell, and thanking God for my great happiness. My thoughts, when they were wildest, never rose near the happiness that I have known with you, and that we have before us."

He embraced her, solemnly commended her to Heaven, and humbly thanked Heaven for having bestowed her on him. By-and-by, they went into the house.

There was no one bidden to the marriage but Mr. Lorry; there was even to be no bridesmaid but the gaunt Miss Pross. The marriage was to make no change in their place of residence; they had been able to extend it, by taking to themselves the upper rooms formerly belonging to the apocryphal invisible lodger, and they desired nothing more.

Doctor Manette was very cheerful at the little supper. They were only three at table, and Miss Pross made the third. He regretted that Charles was not there; was more than half disposed to object to the loving little plot that kept him away; and drank to him affectionately.

So, the time came for him to bid Lucie good night, and they separated. But in the stillness of the third hour of the morning, Lucie came down-stairs again, and stole into his room; not free from unshaped fears, beforehand.

All things, however, were in their places; all was quiet; and he lay asleep, his white hair picturesque on the untroubled pillow, and his hands lying quiet on the coverlet. She put her needless candle in the shadow at a distance, crept up to his bed, and put her lips to his; then, leaned over him and looked at him.

Into his handsome face, the bitter waters of captivity had worn; but, he covered up their tracks with a determination so strong, that he held the mastery of them, even in his sleep. A more remarkable face in its quiet, resolute, and guarded struggle with an unseen assailant, was not to be beheld in all the wide dominions of sleep, that night.

She timidly laid her hand on his dear breast, and put up a prayer that she might ever be as true to him as her love aspired to be, and as his sorrows deserved. Then, she withdrew her hand, and kissed his lips once more, and went away. So, the sunrise came, and the shadows of the leaves of the plane-tree moved upon his face, as softly as her lips had moved in praying for him.

CHAPTER XVIII.

Nine Days.

THE marriage day was shining brightly, and they were ready outside the closed door of the Doctor's room, where he was speaking with Charles Darnay. They were ready to go to church; the beautiful bride, Mr. Lorry, and Miss Pross—to whom the event, through a gradual process of reconciliation to the inevitable, would have been one of absolute bliss, but for the yet lingering consideration that her brother Solomon should have been the bridegroom.

“And so,” said Mr. Lorry, who could not sufficiently admire the bride, and who had been moving round her to take in every point of her quiet, pretty dress; “and so it was for this, my sweet Lucie, that I brought you across the Channel, such a baby! Lord bless me! How little I thought what I was doing. How lightly I valued the obligation I was conferring on my friend Mr. Charles!”

“You didn't mean it,” remarked the matter-of-fact Miss Pross, “and therefore how could you know it? Nonsense!”

“Really? Well; but don't cry,” said the gentle Mr. Lorry.

“I am not crying,” said Miss Pross; “*you are.*”

“I, my Pross?” (By this time, Mr. Lorry dared to be pleasant with her, on occasion.)

"You were just now ; I saw you do it, and I don't wonder at it. Such a present of plate as you have made 'em, is enough to bring tears into anybody's eyes. There's not a fork or a spoon in the collection," said Miss Pross, "that I didn't cry over, last night after the box came, till I couldn't see it."

"I am highly gratified," said Mr. Lorry, "though, upon my honour, I had no intention of rendering those trifling articles of remembrance, invisible to any one. Dear me ! This is an occasion that makes a man speculate on all he has lost. Dear, dear, dear ! To think that there might have been a Mrs. Lorry, any time these fifty years almost !"

"Not at all !" From Miss Pross.

"You think there never might have been a Mrs. Lorry ?" asked the gentleman of that name.

"Pooh !" rejoined Miss Pross ; "you were a bachelor in your cradle."

"Well !" observed Mr. Lorry, beamingly adjusting his little wig, "that seems probable, too."

"And you were cut out for a bachelor," pursued Miss Pross, "before you were put in your cradle."

"Then, I think," said Mr. Lorry, "that I was very unhandsomely dealt with, and that I ought to have had a voice in the selection of my pattern. Enough ! Now, my dear Lucie," drawing his arm soothingly round her waist, "I hear them moving in the next room, and Miss Pross and I, as two formal folks of business, are anxious not to lose the final opportunity of saying something to you that you wish to hear. You leave your good father, my dear, in hands as earnest and as loving as your own ; he shall be taken every conceivable care of ; during the next fortnight, while you are in Warwickshire and thereabouts, even Tellson's shall go to the wall (comparatively speaking) before him. And when, at the fortnight's end, he comes to join you and your beloved husband, on your other fortnight's trip in Wales, you shall say that we have sent him to you in the best health and in the happiest frame. Now, I hear Somebody's step coming to the door. Let me kiss my dear girl with an old-fashioned bachelor blessing, before Somebody comes to claim his own.

For a moment, he held the fair face from him to look at the well-remembered expression on the forehead, and then laid the bright golden hair against his little brown wig, with a genuine tenderness and delicacy, which, if such things be old-fashioned, were as old as Adam.

The door of the Doctor's room opened, and he came out with Charles Darnay. He was so deadly pale—which had not been the case when they went in together—that no vestige of colour was to be seen in his face. But, in

the composure of his manner he was unaltered, except that to the shrewd glance of Mr. Lorry it disclosed some shadowy indication that the old air of avoidance and dread had lately passed over him, like a cold wind.

He gave his arm to his daughter, and took her down-stairs to the chariot which Mr. Lorry had hired in honour of the day. The rest followed in another carriage, and soon, in a neighbouring church where no strange eyes looked on, Charles Darnay and Lucie Manette were happily married.

Besides the glancing tears that shone among the smiles of the little group when it was done, some diamonds, very bright and sparkling, glanced on the bride's hand, which were newly released from the dark obscurity of one of Mr. Lorry's pockets. They returned home to breakfast, and all went well, and in due course the golden hair that had mingled with the poor shoemaker's white locks in the Paris garret, were mingled with them again in the morning sunlight, on the threshold of the door at parting.

It was a hard parting, though it was not for long. But, her father cheered her, and said at last, gently disengaging himself from her enfolding arms, "Take her, Charles! She is yours!" And her agitated hand waved to them from a chaise window and she was gone.

The corner being out of the way of the idle and curious, and the preparations having been very simple and few, the Doctor, Mr. Lorry, and Miss Pross, were left quite alone. It was when they turned into the welcome shade of the cool old hall, that Mr. Lorry observed a great change to have come over the Doctor; as if the golden arm uplifted there, had struck him a poisoned blow.

He had naturally repressed much, and some revulsion might have been expected in him when the occasion for repression was gone. But, it was the old scared lost look that troubled Mr. Lorry; and through his absent manner of clasping his head and drearily wandering away into his own room when they got up-stairs, Mr. Lorry was reminded of Defarge the wine-shop keeper, and the starlight ride.

"I think," he whispered to Miss Pross, after anxious consideration, "I think we had best not to speak to him just now, or at all disturb him. I must look in at Tellson's; so I will go there at once and come back presently. Then, we will take him a ride into the country and dine there, and all will be well."

It was easier for Mr. Lorry to look in at Tellson's than to look out of Tellson's. He was detained two hours. When he came back, he ascended the old staircase alone, having asked no question of the servant; going thus

into the Doctor's rooms, he was stopped by a low sound of knocking.

"Good God!" he said, with a start. "What's that?"

Miss Pross, with a terrified face, was at his ear. "O me, O me! All is lost!" cried she wringing her hands. "What is to be told to Ladybird? He doesn't know me, and is making shoes!"

Mr. Lorry said what he could to calm her, and went himself into the Doctor's room. The bench was turned towards the light, as it had been when he had seen the shoemaker at his work before, and his head was bent down, and he was very busy.

"Doctor Manette. My dear friend, Doctor Manette!"

The Doctor looked at him for a moment—half inquiringly, half as if he were angry at being spoken to—and bent over his work again.

He had laid aside his coat and waistcoat; his shirt was open at the throat, as it used to be when he did that work; and even the old haggard faded surface of face had come back to him. He worked hard—impatiently—as if in some sense of having been interrupted.

Mr. Lorry glanced at the work in his hand, and observed that it was a shoe of the old size and shape. He took up another that was lying by him, and asked him what it was?

"A young lady's walking shoe," he muttered, without looking up. "It ought to have been finished long ago. Let it be."

"But, Doctor Manette. Look at me!"

He obeyed, in the old mechanically submissive manner, without pausing in his work.

"You know me, my dear friend? Think again. This is not your proper occupation. Think, dear friend!"

Nothing would induce him to speak more. He looked up, for an instant at a time, when he was requested to do so; but, no persuasion could extract a word from him. He worked, and worked, and worked, in silence, and words fell on him as they would have fallen on an echoless wall, or on the air. The only ray of hope that Mr. Lorry could discover, was, that he sometimes furtively looked up without being asked. In that, there seemed a faint expression of curiosity or perplexity—as though he were trying to reconcile some doubts in his mind.

Two things at once impressed themselves on Mr. Lorry, as important above all others; the first, that this must be kept secret from Lucie; the second, that it must be kept secret from all who knew him. In conjunction with Miss Pross, he took immediate steps towards the latter precaution, by giving out that the Doctor was not well, and required a few days of complete rest. In

aid of the kind deception to be practised on his daughter, Miss Pross was to write, describing his having been called away professionally, and referring to an imaginary letter of two or three hurried lines in his own hand, represented to have been addressed to her by the same post.

These measures, advisable to be taken in any case, Mr. Lorry took in the hope of his coming to himself. If that should happen soon, he kept another course in reserve; which was, to have a certain opinion that he thought the best, on the Doctor's case.

In the hope of his recovery, and of resort to this third course being thereby rendered practicable, Mr. Lorry resolved to watch him attentively, with as little appearance as possible of doing so. He therefore made arrangements to absent himself from Tellson's for the first time in his life, and took his post by the window in the same room.

He was not long in discovering that it was worse than useless to speak to him, since, on being pressed, he became worried. He abandoned that attempt on the first day, and resolved merely to keep himself always before him, as a silent protest against the delusion into which he had fallen, or was falling. He remained, therefore, in his seat near the window, reading and writing, and expressing in as many pleasant and natural ways as he could think of, that it was a free place.

Doctor Manette took what was given him to eat and drink, and worked on that first day, until it was too dark to see—worked on, half an hour after Mr. Lorry could not have seen, for his life, to read or write. When he put his tools aside as useless, until morning, Mr. Lorry rose and said to him:

“Will you go out?”

He looked down at the floor on either side of him in the old manner, looked up in the old manner and repeated in the old low voice:

“Out?”

“Yes; for a walk with me. Why not?”

He made no effort to say why not, and said not a word more. But, Mr. Lorry thought he saw, as he leaned forward on his bench in the dusk, with his elbows on his knees and his head in his hands, that he was in some misty way asking himself, “Why not?” The sagacity of the man of business perceived an advantage here, and determined to hold it.

Miss Pross and he divided the night into two watches, and observed him at intervals from the adjoining room. He paced up and down for a long time before he lay down; but, when he did finally lay himself down, he fell asleep. In the morning, he was up betimes, and went straight to his bench and to work.

On this second day, Mr. Lorry saluted him cheerfully by his name, and spoke to him on topics that had been of late familiar to them. He returned no reply, but it was evident that he heard what was said, and that he thought about it, however confusedly. This encouraged Mr. Lorry to have Miss Pross in with her work, several times during the day; at those times, they quietly spoke of Lucie, and of her father then present, precisely in their usual manner, and as if there were nothing amiss. This was done without any demonstrative accompaniment, not long enough, or often enough to harass him; and it lightened Mr. Lorry's friendly heart to believe that he looked up oftener, and that he appeared to be stirred by some perception of inconsistencies surrounding him.

When it fell dark again, Mr. Lorry asked him as before :

"Dear Doctor, will you go out?"

As before, he repeated, "Out?"

"Yes; for a walk with me. Why not?"

This time, Mr. Lorry feigned to go out when he could extract no answer from him, and, after remaining absent for an hour, returned. In the mean while, the Doctor had removed to the seat in the window, and had sat there looking down at the plane-tree; but, on Mr. Lorry's return, he slipped away to his bench.

The time went very slowly on, and Mr. Lorry's hope darkened, and his heart grew heavier again, and grew yet heavier and heavier every day. The third day came and went, the fourth, the fifth. Five days, six days, seven days, eight days, nine days.

With a hope ever darkening, and with a heart always growing heavier and heavier, Mr. Lorry passed through this anxious time. The secret was well kept, and Lucie was unconscious and happy; but, he could not fail to observe that the shoemaker, whose hand had been a little out at first, was growing dreadfully skilful, and that he had never been so intent on his work, and that his hands had never been so nimble and expert, as in the dusk of the ninth evening.

CHAPTER XIX.

An Opinion.

WORN out by anxious watching, Mr. Lorry fell asleep at his post. On the tenth morning of his suspense, he was startled by the shining of the sun into the room

where a heavy slumber had overtaken him when it was dark night.

He rubbed his eyes and roused himself; but he doubted when he had done so, whether he was not still asleep. For, going to the door of the Doctor's room and looking in, he perceived that the shoemaker's bench and tools were put aside again, and that the Doctor himself sat reading at the window. He was in his usual morning dress, and his face (which Mr. Lorry could distinctly see), though still very pale, was calmly studious and attentive.

Even when he had satisfied himself that he was awake, Mr. Lorry felt giddily uncertain for some few moments whether the late shoemaking might not be a disturbed dream of his own; for, did not his eyes show him his friend before him in his accustomed clothing and aspect, and employed as usual; and was there any sign within their range, that the change of which he had so strong an impression had actually happened?

It was but the inquiry of his first confusion and astonishment, the answer being obvious. If the impression were not produced by a real corresponding, and sufficient cause, how came he, Jarvis Lorry, there? How came he to have fallen asleep, in his clothes, on the sofa in Doctor Manette's consulting-room, and to be debating these points outside the Doctor's bedroom door in the early morning?

Within a few minutes, Miss Pross stood whispering at his side. If he had had any particle of doubt left, her talk would of necessity have resolved it; but he was by that time clear-headed, and had none. He advised that they should let the time go by until the regular breakfast-hour, and should then meet the Doctor as if nothing unusual had occurred. If he appeared to be in his customary state of mind, Mr. Lorry would then cautiously proceed to seek direction and guidance from the opinion he had been, in his anxiety, so anxious to obtain.

Miss Pross, submitting herself to his judgment, the scheme was worked out with care. Having abundance of time for his usual methodical toilette, Mr. Lorry presented himself at the breakfast-hour in his usual white linen and with his usual neat leg. The Doctor was summoned in the usual way, and came to breakfast.

So far as it was possible to comprehend him without overstepping those delicate and gradual approaches which Mr. Lorry felt to be the only safe advance, he at first supposed that his daughter's marriage had taken place yesterday. An incidental allusion, purposely thrown out, to the day of the week, and the day of the month, set him thinking and counting, and evidently made him uneasy. In all other respects, however, he

was so composedly himself, that Mr. Lorry determined to have the aid he sought. And that aid was his own.

Therefore, when the breakfast was done and cleared away, and he and the Doctor were left together, Mr. Lorry said, feelingly :

“ My dear Manette, I am anxious to have your opinion, in confidence, on a very curious case in which I am deeply interested ; that is to say, it is very curious to me ; perhaps, to your better information it may be less so.”

Glancing at his hands, which were discoloured by his late work, the Doctor looked troubled, and listened attentively. He had already glanced at his hands more than'once.

“ Doctor Manette,” said Mr. Lorry, touching him affectionately on the arm, “ the case is a case of a particularly dear friend of mine. Pray give your mind to it, and advise me well for his sake—and above all for his daughter's—his daughter's, my dear Manette.”

“ If I understand,” said the Doctor, in a subdued tone, ‘ some mental shock ? ’

“ Yes ! ”

“ Be explicit,” said the Doctor. “ Spare no details.”

Mr. Lorry saw that they understood one another, and proceeded.

“ My dear Manette, it is the case of an old and a prolonged shock, of great acuteness and severity, to the affections, the feelings, the—the—as you express it—the mind. The mind. It is the case of a shock under which the sufferer was borne down, one cannot say for how long, because I believe he cannot calculate the time himself, and there are no other means of getting at it. It is the case of a shock from which the sufferer recovered, by a process that he cannot trace himself—as I once heard him publicly relate in a striking manner. It is the case of a shock from which he has recovered, so completely, as to be a highly intelligent man, capable of close application of mind, and great exertion of body, and of constantly making fresh additions to his stock of knowledge, which was already very large. But, unfortunately, there has been,” he paused and took a deep breath—“ a slight relapse.”

The Doctor, in a low voice, asked, “ Of how long duration ? ”

“ Nine days and nights.”

“ How did it show itself ? I infer,” glancing at his hands again, “ in the resumption of some old pursuit connected with the shock ? ”

“ That is the fact.”

“ Now, did you ever see him,” asked the Doctor, distinctly and collectedly, though in the same low voice, “ engaged in that pursuit originally ? ”

“Once.”

“And when the relapse fell on him, was he in most respects—or in all respects—as he was then?”

“I think, in all respects.”

“You spoke of his daughter. Does his daughter know of the relapse?”

“No. It has been kept from her, and I hope will always be kept from her. It is known only to myself, and to one other who may be trusted.”

The Doctor grasped his hand, and murmured, “That was very kind. That was very thoughtful!” Mr. Lorry grasped his hand in return, and neither of the two spoke for a little while.

“Now, my dear Manette,” said Mr. Lorry, at length, in his most considerate and most affectionate way, “I am a mere man of business, and unfit to cope with such intricate and difficult matters. I do not possess the kind of information necessary; I do not possess the kind of intelligence; I want guiding. There is no man in this world on whom I could so rely for right guidance, as on you. Tell me, how does this relapse come about? Is there danger of another? Could a repetition of it be prevented? How should a repetition of it be treated? How does it come about at all? What can I do for my friend? No man ever can have been more desirous in his heart to serve a friend, than I am to serve mine, if I knew how. But I don’t know how to originate, in such a case. If your sagacity, knowledge, and experience, could put me on the right track, I might be able to do so much; unenlightened and undirected, I can do so little. Pray discuss it with me; pray enable me to see it a little more clearly, and teach me how to be a little more useful.”

Doctor Manette sat meditating after these earnest words were spoken, and Mr. Lorry did not press him.

“I think it probable,” said the Doctor, breaking silence with an effort, “that the relapse you have described, my dear friend, was not quite unforeseen by its subject.”

“Was it dreaded by him?” Mr. Lorry ventured to ask.

“Very much.” He said it with an involuntary shudder. “You have no idea how such an apprehension weighs on the sufferer’s mind, and how difficult—how almost impossible—it is for him to force himself to utter a word upon the topic that oppresses him.”

“Would he,” asked Mr. Lorry, “be sensibly relieved if he could prevail upon himself to impart that secret brooding to any one, when it is on him?”

“I think so. But it is, as I have told you, next to im-

possible. I even believe it—in some cases—to be quite impossible.”

“Now,” said Mr. Lorry, gently laying his hand on the Doctor’s arm again, after a short silence on both sides, “to what would you refer this attack?”

“I believe,” returned Doctor Manette, “that there had been a strong and extraordinary revival of the train of thought and remembrance that was the first cause of the malady. Some intense associations of a most distressing nature were vividly recalled, I think. It is probable that there had long been a dread lurking in his mind, that those associations would be recalled—say, under certain circumstances—say, on a particular occasion. He tried to prepare himself, in vain; perhaps the effort to prepare himself, made him less able to bear it.”

“Would he remember what took place in the relapse?” asked Mr. Lorry, with natural hesitation.

The Doctor looked desolately round the room, shook his head, and answered, in a low voice, “Not at all.”

“Now, as to the future,” hinted Mr. Lorry.

“As to the future,” said the Doctor, recovering firmness, “I should have great hope. As it pleased Heaven in its Mercy to restore him so soon, I should have great hope. He, yielding under the pressure of a complicated something, long dreaded and long vaguely foreseen and contended against, and recovering after the cloud had burst and passed, I should hope that the worst was over.”

“Well, well! That’s good comfort. I am thankful!” said Mr. Lorry.

“I am thankful!” repeated the Doctor, bending his head with reverence.

“There are two other points,” said Mr. Lorry, “on which I am anxious to be instructed. I may go on?”

“You cannot do your friend a better service.” The Doctor gave him his hand.

“To the first, then. He is of a studious habit, and unusually energetic; he applies himself with great ardour to the acquisition of professional knowledge, to the conducting of experiments, to many things. Now, does he do too much?”

“I think not. It may be the character of his mind, to be always in singular need of occupation. That may be, in part, natural to it; in part, the result of affliction. The less it was occupied with healthy things, the more it would be in danger of turning in the unhealthy direction. He may have observed himself, and made the discovery.”

“You are sure that he is not under too great a strain?”

“I think I am quite sure of it.”

“My dear Manette, if he were overworked now—”

“My dear Lorry, I doubt if that could easily be.”



STILL, THE DOCTOR, WITH SHADED FOREHEAD, BEAT HIS FOOT NERVOUSLY ON THE GROUND.

—A Tale of Two Cities, Vol. Eleven, page 179.

There has been a violent stress in one direction, and it needs a counter-weight."

"Excuse me, as a persistent man of business. Assuming for a moment, that he *was* overworked; it would show itself in some renewal of this disorder?"

"I do not think so. I do not think," said Doctor Manette with the firmness of self-conviction, "that anything but the one train of association would renew it. I think that, henceforth, nothing but some extraordinary jarring of that chord could renew it. After what has happened, and after his recovery, I find it difficult to imagine any such violent sounding of that string again. I trust, and I almost believe, that the circumstances likely to renew it are exhausted."

He spoke with the diffidence of a man who knew how slight a thing would upset the delicate organisation of the mind, and yet with the confidence of a man who had slowly won his assurance out of personal endurance and distress. It was not for his friend to abate that confidence. He professed himself more relieved and encouraged than he really was, and approached his second and last point. He felt it to be the most difficult of all; but, remembering his old Sunday morning conversation with Miss Pross, and remembering what he had seen in the last nine days, he knew that he must face it.

"The occupation resumed under the influence of this passing affliction so happily recovered from," said Mr. Lorry, clearing his throat, "we will call—Blacksmith's work. Blacksmith's work. We will say, to put a case and for the sake of illustration, that he had been used in his bad time, to work at a little forge. We will say that he was unexpectedly found at his forge again. Is it not a pity that he should keep it by him?"

The Doctor shaded his forehead with his hand, and beat his foot nervously on the ground.

"He has always kept it by him," said Mr. Lorry, with an anxious look at his friend. "Now, would it not be better that he should let it go?"

Still, the Doctor, with shaded forehead, beat his foot nervously on the ground.

"You do not find it easy to advise me?" said Mr. Lorry. "I quite understand it to be a nice question. And yet I think—" And there he shook his head, and stopped.

"You see," said Doctor Manette, turning to him after an uneasy pause, it is very hard to explain, consistently, the innermost working of this poor man's mind. He once yearned so frightfully for that occupation, and it was so welcome when it came; no doubt it relieved his pain so much, by substituting the perplexity of the fingers for the perplexity of the brain, and by substituting,

as he became more practised, the ingenuity of the hands for the ingenuity of the mental torture; that he has never been able to bear the thought of putting it quite out of his reach. Even now, when, I believe, he is more hopeful of himself than he has ever been, and even speaks of himself with a kind of confidence, the idea that he might need that old employment, and not find it, gives him a sudden sense of terror, like that which one may fancy strikes to the heart of a lost child."

He looked like his illustration, as he raised his eyes to Mr. Lorry's face.

"But may not—mind! I ask for information, as a plodding man of business who only deals with such material objects as guineas, shillings, and bank-notes—may not the retention of the thing, involve the retention of the idea? If the thing were gone, my dear Manette, might not the fear go with it? In short, is it not a concession to the misgiving, to keep the forge?"

There was another silence.

"You see, too," said the Doctor, tremulously, "it is such an old companion."

"I would not keep it," said Mr. Lorry, shaking his head; for he gained in firmness as he saw the Doctor disquieted. "I would recommend him to sacrifice it. I only want your authority. I am sure it does no good. Come! Give me your authority, like a dear good man. For his daughter's sake, my dear Manette!"

Very strange to see what a struggle there was within him!

"In her name, then, let it be done; I sanction it. But, I would not take it away while he was present. Let it be removed when he is not there; let him miss his old companion after an absence."

Mr. Lorry readily engaged for that, and the conference was ended. They passed the day in the country, and the Doctor was quite restored. On the three following days, he remained perfectly well, and on the fourteenth day, he went away to join Lucie and her husband. The precaution that had been taken to account for his silence, Mr. Lorry had previously explained to him, and he had written to Lucie in accordance with it, and she had no suspicions.

On the night of the day on which he left the house, Mr. Lorry went into his room with a chopper, saw, chisel, and hammer, attended by Miss Pross carrying a light. There, with closed doors, and in a mysterious and guilty manner, Mr. Lorry hacked the shoemaker's bench to pieces, while Miss Pross held the candle, as if she were assisting at a murder—for which, indeed, in her grimness, she was no unsuitable figure. The burning of the body (previously reduced to pieces convenient for the

purpose), was commenced without delay in the kitchen fire; and the tools, shoes, and leather, were buried in the garden. So wicked do destruction and secrecy appear to honest minds, that Mr. Lorry and Miss Pross, while engaged in the commission of their deed and in the removal of its traces, almost felt, and almost looked, like accomplices in a horrible crime.

CHAPTER XX.

A Plea.

WHEN the newly-married pair came home, the first person who appeared, to offer his congratulations, was Sydney Carton. They had not been at home many hours, when he presented himself. He was not improved in habits, or in looks, or in manner; but, there was a certain rugged air of fidelity about him, which was new to the observation of Charles Darnay.

He watched his opportunity of taking Darnay aside into a window, and of speaking to him when no one overheard.

“Mr. Darnay,” said Carton, “I wish we might be friends.”

“We are already friends, I hope.”

“You are good enough to say so, as a fashion of speech; but, I don’t mean any fashion of speech. Indeed, when I say I wish we might be friends, I scarcely mean quite that, either.”

Charles Darnay—as was natural—asked him, in all good humour and good-fellowship, what he did mean?

“Upon my life,” said Carton, smiling, “I find that easier to comprehend in my own mind, than to convey to yours. However, let me try. You remember a certain famous occasion when I was more drunk than—than usual?”

“I remember a certain famous occasion when you forced me to confess that you had been drinking.”

“I remember it too. The curse of those occasions is heavy upon me, for I always remember them. I hope it may be taken into account one day, when all days are at an end for me!—Don’t be alarmed; I am not going to preach.”

“I am not at all alarmed. Earnestness in you, is anything but alarming to me.”

“Ah!” said Carton, with a careless wave of his hand, as if he waved that away. “On the drunken occasion in question (one of a large number, as you know), I was

insufferable about liking you, and not liking you. I wish you would forget it."

"I forgot it long ago."

"Fashion of speech again! But, Mr. Darnay, oblivion is not so easy to me, as you represent it to be to you. I have by no means forgotten it, and a light answer does not help me to forget it."

"If it was a light answer," returned Darney, "I beg your forgiveness for it. I had no other object than to turn a slight thing, which, to my surprise, seems to trouble you too much, aside. I declare to you, on the faith of a gentleman, that I have long dismissed it from my mind. Good Heaven, what was there to dismiss! Have I had nothing more important to remember, in the great service you rendered me that day?"

"As to the great service," said Carton, "I am bound to avow to you, when you speak of it in that way, that it was mere professional clap-trap. I don't know that I cared what became of you, when I rendered it.—Mind! I say when I rendered it; I am speaking of the past."

"You make light of the obligation," returned Darney, "but I will not quarrel with *your* light answer."

"Genuine truth, Mr. Darnay, trust me! I have gone aside from my purpose; I was speaking about our being friends. Now, you know me; you know I am incapable of all the higher and better flights of men. If you doubt it, ask Stryver, and he'll tell you so."

"I prefer to form my own opinion, without the aid of his."

"Well! At any rate you know me as a dissolute dog, who has never done any good, and never will."

"I don't know that you 'never will.'"

"But I do, and you must take my word for it. Well! If you could endure to have such a worthless fellow, and a fellow of such indifferent reputation, coming and going at odd times, I should ask that I might be permitted to come and go as a privileged person here; that I might be regarded as an useless (and I would add, if it were not for the resemblance I detected between you and me, an unornamental) piece of furniture, tolerated for its old service, and taken no notice of. I doubt if I should abuse the permission. It is a hundred to one if I should avail myself of it four times in a year. It would satisfy me, I dare say, to know that I had it."

"Will you try?"

"That is another way of saying that I am placed on the footing I have indicated. I thank you, Darnay. I may use that freedom with your name?"

"I think so, Carton, by this time."

They shook hands upon it, and Sydney turned away.

Within a minute afterwards, he was to all outward appearance, as unsubstantial as ever.

When he was gone, and in the course of an evening passed with Miss Pross, the Doctor, and Mr. Lorry, Charles Darnay made some mention of this conversation in general terms, and spoke of Sydney Carton as a problem of carelessness and recklessness. He spoke of him, in short, not bitterly or meaning to bear hard upon him, but as anybody might who saw him as he showed himself.

He had no idea that this could dwell in the thoughts of his fair young wife ; but, when he afterwards joined her in their own rooms, he found her waiting for him with the old pretty lifting of the forehead strongly marked.

“ We are thoughtful to-night ! ” said Darnay, drawing his arm about her.

“ Yes, dearest Charles, ” with her hands on his breast, and the inquiring and attentive expression fixed upon him ; “ we are rather thoughtful to-night, for we have something on our mind to night. ”

“ What is it, my Lucie ? ”

“ Will you promise not to press one question on me, if I beg you not to ask it ? ”

“ Will I promise ? What will I not promise to my Love ? ”

What, indeed, with his hand putting aside the golden hair from the cheek, and his other hand against the heart that beat for him !

“ I think, Charles, poor Mr. Carton deserves more consideration and respect than you expressed for him to-night. ”

“ Indeed, my own ? Why so ? ”

“ That is what you are not to ask me ? But I think—I know—he does. ”

“ If you know it, it is enough. What would you have me do, my Life ? ”

“ I would ask you, dearest, to be very generous with him always, and very lenient on his faults when he is not by. I would ask you to believe that he has a heart he very, very seldom reveals, and that there are deep wounds in it. My dear, I have seen it bleeding. ”

“ It is a painful reflection to me, ” said Charles Darnay, quite astounded, “ that I should have done him any wrong. I never thought this of him. ”

“ My husband, it is so. I fear he is not to be reclaimed ; there is scarcely a hope that anything in his character or fortunes is reparable now. But, I am sure that he is capable of good things, gentle things, even magnanimous things. ”

She looked so beautiful in the purity of her faith in

this lost man, that her husband could have looked at her as she was, for hours.

“And, O my dearest Love!” she urged, clinging nearer to him, laying her head upon his breast, and raising her eyes to his, “remember how strong we are in our happiness, and how weak he is in his misery!”

The supplication touched him home. “I will always remember it, dear Heart! I will remember it as long as I live.”

He bent over the golden head, and put the rosy lips to his, and folded her in his arms. If one forlorn wanderer then pacing the dark streets, could have heard her innocent disclosure, and could have seen the drops of pity kissed away by her husband, from the soft blue eyes so loving of that husband, he might have cried to the night—and the words would not have parted from his lips for the first time—

“God bless her for her sweet compassion!”

CHAPTER XXI.

Echoing Footsteps.

A WONDERFUL corner for echoes, it has been remarked, that corner where the Doctor lived. Ever busily winding the golden thread which bound her husband, and her father, and herself, and her old directress and companion, in a life of quiet bliss, Lucie sat in the still house in the tranquility resounding corner listening to the echoing footsteps of years.

At first, there were times, though she was a perfectly happy young wife, when her work would slowly fall from her hands, and her eyes would be dimmed. For there was something coming in the echoes, something light, afar off, and scarcely audible yet, that stirred her heart too much. Fluttering hopes and doubts—hopes, of a love as yet unknown to her; doubts, of her remaining upon earth, to enjoy that new delight—divided her breast. Among the echoes then, there would arise the sound of footsteps at her own early grave; and thoughts of the husband who would be left so desolate, and who would mourn for her so much, swelled to her eyes and broke like waves.

That time passed, and her little Lucie lay on her bosom. Then, among the advancing echoes, there was the tread of her tiny feet and the sound of her prattling words. Let greater echoes resound as they would, the young mother at the cradle side could always hear those

coming. They came, and the shady house was sunny with a child's laugh, and the Divine friend of children, to whom in her trouble she had confided hers, seemed to take her child in his arms, as He took the child of old, and made it a sacred joy to her.

Ever busily winding the golden thread that bound them all together, weaving the service of her happy influence through the tissue of all their lives, and making it predominate nowhere. Lucie heard in the echoes of years none but friendly and soothing sounds. Her husband's step was strong and prosperous among them; her father's, firm and equal. Lo, Miss Pross, in harness of string, awakening the echoes, as an unruly charger, whip-corrected, snorting and pawing the earth under the plane-tree in the garden!

Even when there were sounds of sorrow among the rest, they were not harsh nor cruel. Even when golden hair, like her own, lay in a halo, on a pillow round the worn face of a little boy, and he said, with a radiant smile, "Dear papa and mamma, I am very sorry to leave you both, and to leave my pretty sister; but I am called, and I must go!" those were not tears all of agony that wetted his young mother's cheek, as the spirit departed from her embrace that had been entrusted to it. Suffer them and forbid them not. They see my Father's face. O Father, blessed words!

Thus, the rustling of an Angel's wings got blended with the other echoes, and they were not wholly of earth, but had in them that breath of Heaven. Sighs of the winds that blew over a little garden-tomb were mingled with them also, and both were audible to Lucie, in a hushed murmur—like the breathing of a summer sea asleep upon a sandy shore—as the little Lucie, comically studious at the task of the morning, or dressing a doll at her mother's footstool, chattered in the tongues of the Two Cities that were blended in her life.

The echoes rarely answered to the actual tread of Sydney Carton. Some half-dozen times a year, at most, he claimed his privilege of coming in uninvited, and would sit among them through the evening as he had once done often. He never came there, heated with wine. And one other thing regarding him was whispered in the echoes, which has been whispered by all true echoers for ages and ages.

No man ever really loved a woman, lost her, and knew her with a blameless though an unchanged mind, when she was a wife and a mother, but her children had a strange sympathy with him—an instinctive delicacy of pity for him. What fine hidden sensibilities are touched in such a case, no echoes tell; but it is so, and it was so here. Carton was the first stranger to whom little Lu-

cie held out her chubby arms, and he kept his place with her as she grew. The little boy had spoken of him, almost at the last. "Poor Carton! Kiss him for me!"

Mr. Stryver shouldered his way through the law, like some great engine forcing itself through turbid water, and dragged his useful friend in his wake, like a boat towed astern. As the boat so favored is usually in a rough plight and mostly under water, so Sydney had a swamped life of it. But, easy and strong custom, unhappily so much easier and stronger in him than any stimulating sense of desert or disgrace, made it the life he was to lead; and he no more thought of emerging from his state of lion's jackal, than any real jackal may be supposed to think of rising to be a lion. Stryver was rich; had married a florid widow with property and three boys, who had nothing particularly shining about them but the straight hair of their dumpling heads.

These three young gentleman, Mr. Stryver, exuding patronage of the most offensive quality from every pore, had walked before him, like three sheep, to the quiet corner in Soho, and had offered as pupils to Lucie's husband: delicately saying, "Halloa! here are three lumps of bread-and-cheese towards your matrimonial pic-nic, Darnay!" The polite rejection of the three lumps of bread-and-cheese had quite bloated Mr. Stryver with indignation, which he afterwards turned to account in the training of the young gentlemen, by directing them to beware of the pride of Beggars, like that tutor-fellow. He was also in the habit of declaiming to Mrs. Stryver, over his full-bodied wine, on the arts Mrs. Darnay had once put in practice to "catch" him, and on the diamond-cut-diamond arts in himself, madam, which had rendered him "not to be caught." Some of his King's Bench familiars, who were occasionally parties to the full-bodied wine and the lie, excused him for the latter by saying that he had told it so often, that he believed it himself—which is surely such an incorrigible aggravation of an originally bad offence, as to justify any such offender's being carried off to some suitable retired spot and there hanged out of the way.

These were among the echoes to which Lucie, sometimes pensive, sometimes amused and laughing, listened in the echoing corner, until her little daughter was six years old. How near to her heart the echoes of her child's tread came, and those of her own dear father's, always active and self-possessed, and those of her dear husband's, need not be told. Nor, how the lightest echo of their united home, directed by herself with such a wise and elegant thrift that it was more abundant than any waste, was music to her. Nor, how there were

echoes all about her, sweet in her ears, of the many times her father had told her that he found her more devoted to him married (if that could be) than single, and of the many times her husband had said to her that no cares and duties seemed to divide her love for him or her help to him, and asked her "What is the magic secret, my darling, of your being everything to all of us, as if there were only one of us, yet never seeming to be hurried, or to have too much to do?"

But, there were other echoes, from a distance, that rumbled menacingly in the corner all through this space of time. And it was now, about little Lucie's sixth birthday, that they began to have an awful sound, as of a great storm in France with a dreadful sea rising.

On a night in mid July, one thousand seven hundred and eighty-nine, Mr. Lorry came in late, from Tellson's, and sat himself down by Lucie and her husband in the dark window. It was a hot wild night, and they were all three reminded of the old Sunday night when they had looked at the lightning from the same place.

"I began to think," said Mr. Lorry, pushing his brown wig back, "that I should have to pass the night at Tellson's. We have been so full of business all day, that we have not known what to do first, or which way to turn. There is such an uneasiness in Paris, that we have actually a run of confidence upon us! Our customers over there, seem not to be able to confide their property to us fast enough. There is positively a mania among some of them for sending it to England."

"That has a bad look," said Darnay.

"A bad look, you say, my dear Darnay? Yes, but we don't know what reason there is in it. People are so unreasonable! Some of us at Tellson's are getting old, and we really can't be troubled out of the ordinary course without due occasion."

"Still," said Darnay, "you know how gloomy and threatening the sky is."

"I know that, to be sure," assented Mr. Lorry, trying to persuade himself that his sweet temper was soured, and that he grumbled, "but I am determined to be peevish after my long day's botheration. Where is Marnette?"

"Here he is!" said the Doctor, entering the dark room at the moment.

"I am quite glad you are at home; for these hurries and forebodings by which I have been surrounded all day long, have made me nervous without reason. You are not going out, I hope?"

"No; I am going to play backgammon with you, if you like," said the Doctor.

"I don't think I do like, if I may speak my mind. I

am not fit to be pitted against you to-night. Is the tea-board still there, Lucie? I can't see."

"Of course, it has been kept for you."

"Thank ye, my dear. The precious child is safe in bed?"

"And sleeping soundly."

"That's right; all safe and well! I don't know why anything should be otherwise than safe and well here, thank God; but I have been so put out all day, and I am not as young as I was! My tea, my dear? Thank ye. Now, come and take your place in the circle, and let us sit quiet, and hear the echoes about which you have your theory."

"Not a theory; it was a fancy."

"A fancy, then, my wise pet," said Mr. Lorry, patting her hand. "They are very numerous and very loud, though, are they not? Only hear them!"

Headlong mad and dangerous footsteps to force their way into anybody's life, footsteps not easily made clean again if once stained red, the footsteps raging in Saint Antoine afar off, as the little circle sat in the dark London window.

Saint Antoine had been, that morning, a vast dusky mass of scarecrows heaving to and fro, with frequent gleams of light above the billowy heads, where steel blades and bayonets shone in the sun. A tremendous roar arose from the throat of Saint Antoine, and a forest of naked arms struggled in the air like shrivelled branches of trees in a winter wind: all the fingers convulsively clutching at every weapon or semblance of a weapon that was thrown up from the depths below, no matter how far off.

Who gave them out, whence they last came, where they began, through what agency they crookedly quivered and jerked, scores at a time, over the heads of the crowd, like a kind of lightning, no eye in the throng could have told; but, muskets were being distributed—so were cartridges, powder, and ball, bars of iron and wood, knives, axes, pikes, every weapon that distracted ingenuity could discover or devise. People who could lay hold of nothing else, set themselves with bleeding hands to force stones and bricks out of their places in walls. Every pulse and heart in Saint Antoine was on high-fever strain and at high-fever heat. Every living creature there led life as of no account, and was demented with a passionate readiness to sacrifice it.

As a whirlpool of boiling waters as a centre point, so, all this raging circled round Defarge's wine-shop, and every human drop in the caldron had a tendency to be sucked towards the vortex where Defarge himself, al-

ready begrimed with gunpowder and sweat, issued orders, issued arms, thrust this man back, dragged this man forward, disarmed one to arm another, laboured and strove in the thickest of the uproar.

“Keep near to me, Jacques Three,” cried Defarge; “and do you, Jacques One and Two, separate and put yourselves at the head of as many of these patriots as you can. Where is my wife?”

“Eh, well! Here you see me!” said madame, composed as ever, but not knitting to-day. Madame’s resolute right hand was occupied with an axe, in place of the usual softer implements, and in her girdle were a pistol and a cruel knife.

“Where do you go, my wife?”

“I go,” said madame, “with you, at present. You shall see me at the head of women, by-and-by.”

“Come, then!” cried Defarge, in a resounding voice. “Patriots and friends, we are ready! The Bastille!”

With a roar that sounded as if all the breath in France had been shaped into the detested word, the living sea rose, wave on wave, depth on depth, and overflowed the city to that point. Alarm-bells ringing, drums beating, the sea raging and thundering on its new beach, the attack begun.

Deep ditches, double drawbridge, massive stone walls, eight great towers, cannon, muskets, fire and smoke. Through the fire and through the smoke—in the fire and in the smoke, for the sea cast him up against a cannon, and on the instant he became a cannonier—Defarge of the wine-shop worked like a manful soldier, Two fierce hours.

Deep ditch, single drawbridge, massive stone walls, eight great towers, cannon, muskets, fire and smoke. One drawbridge down! “Work, comrades all, work! Work, Jacques One, Jacques Two, Jacques One Thousand, Jacques Two Thousand, Jacques Five-and-Twenty Thousand; in the name of all the angels or the devils—which you prefer—work!” Thus Defarge of the wine-shop, still at his gun, which had long grown hot.

“To me, women!” cried madame his wife. “What! We can kill as well as the men when the place is taken!” And to her, with a shrill thirsty cry, trooping women variously armed, but all armed alike in hunger and revenge.

Cannon, muskets, fire and smoke; but, still the deep ditch, the single drawbridge, the massive stone walls and the eight great towers. Slight displacements of the raging sea, made by the falling wounded. Flashing weapons, blazing torches, smoking wagon-loads of wet straw, hard work at neighbouring barricades in all directions, shrieks, volleys, execrations, bravery without

stint, boom smash and rattle, and the furious sounding of the living sea ; but, still the deep ditch, and the single drawbridge, and the massive stone walls, and the eight great towers, and still Defarge of the wine-shop at his gun, grown doubly hot by the service of Four fierce hours.

A white flag from within the fortress, and a parley—this dimly perceptible through the raging storm, nothing audible in it—suddenly the sea rose immeasurably wider and higher, and swept Defarge of the wine-shop over the lowered drawbridge, past the massive stone outer walls, in among the eight great towers surrendered !

So resistless was the force of the ocean bearing him on, that even to draw his breath or turn his head was as impracticable as if he had been struggling in the surf of the South Sea, until he was landed in the outer courtyard of the Bastille. There, against an angle of a wall, he made a struggle to look about him. Jacques Three was nearly at his side ; Madame Defarge still heading some of her women, was visible in the inner distance, and her knife was in her hand. Everywhere was tumult, exultation, deafening and maniacal bewilderment, astounding noise, yet furious dumbshow.

“ The Prisoners ! ”

“ The Records ? ”

“ The secret cells ! ”

“ The instruments of torture ! ”

“ The Prisoners ! ”

Of all these cries, and ten thousand incoherencies, “ The Prisoners ! ” was the cry most taken up by the sea that rushed in, as if there were an eternity of people, as well as of time and space. When the foremost billows rolled past, bearing the prison officers with them, and threatening them all with instant death if any secret nook remained undisclosed, Defarge laid his strong hand on the breast of one these men—a man with a grey head who had a lighted torch in his hand—separated him from the rest, and got him between himself and the wall.

“ Show me the North Tower ! ” said Defarge. “ Quick ! ”

“ I will faithfully,” replied the man, “ if you will come with me. But there is no one there.”

“ What is the meaning of One Hundred and Five, North Tower ? ” asked Defarge. “ Quick ! ”

“ The meaning, monsieur ? ”

“ Does it mean a captive, or a place of captivity ? Or do you mean that I shall strike you dead ? ”

“ Kill him ! ” croaked Jacques Three, who had come close up.

“ Monsieur, it is a cell.”

“Show it me!”

“Pass this way, then.”

Jacques Three, with his usual craving on him, and evidently disappointed by the dialogue taking a turn that did not seem to promise bloodshed, held by Defarge’s arm as he held by the turnkey’s. Their three heads had been close together during this brief discourse, and it had been as much as they could do to hear one another, even then: so tremendous was the noise of the living ocean, in its irruption into the Fortress, and its inundation of the courts and passages and staircases. All around, outside, too, it beat the walls with a deep, hoarse roar, from which, occasionally, some partial shouts of tumult broke and leaped into the air like spray.

Through gloomy vaults where the light of day had never shone, past hideous doors of dark dens and cages, down cavernous flights of steps, and again up steep rugged ascents of stone and brick, more like dry waterfalls than staircases, Defarge, the turnkey, and Jacques Three, linked hand and arm, went with all the speed they could make. Here and there, especially at first, the inundation started on them and swept by; but when they had done descending, and were winding and climbing up a tower, they were alone. Hemmed in here by the massive thickness of walls and arches, the storm within the fortress and without was only audible to them in a dull, subdued way, as if the noise out of which they had come had almost destroyed their sense of hearing.

The turnkey stopped at a low door, put a key in a clashing lock, swung the door slowly open, and said, as they all bent their heads and passed in:

“One hundred and five, North Tower!”

There was a small heavily-grated unglazed window high in the wall, with a stone screen before it, so that the sky could be only seen by stooping low and looking up. There was a small chimney, heavily barred across, a few feet within. There was a heap of old feathery wood ashes on the hearth. There were a stool, and table, and a straw bed. There were the four blackened walls, and a rusted iron ring in one of them.

“Pass that torch slowly along these walls, that I may see them,” said Defarge to the turnkey.

The man obeyed, and Defarge followed the light closely with his eyes.

“Stop!—Look here, Jacques!”

“A. M.!” croaked Jacques Three, as he read greedily.

“Alexandre Manette,” said Defarge in his ear, following the letters with his swart forefinger, deeply en-

grained with gunpowder. "And here he wrote a poor physician." And it was he, without doubt, who scratched a calendar on this stone. What is that in your hand? A crowbar? Give it me!"

He had still the linstock of his gun in his own hand. He made a sudden exchange of the two instruments, and turning on the wormeaten stool and table, beat them to pieces in a few blows.

"Hold the light higher!" he said wrathfully, to the turnkey. "Look among those fragments with care, Jacques. And see! Here is my knife," throwing it to him; "rip open that bed, and search the straw. Hold the light higher, you!"

With a menacing look at the turnkey he crawled upon the hearth, and, peering up the chimney, struck and prised at its sides with the crowbar, and worked at the iron grating across it. In a few minutes, some mortar and dust came dropping down, which he averted his face to avoid; and in it, and in the old wood-ashes, and in a crevice in the chimney into which his weapon had slipped or wrought itself, he groped with a cautious touch.

"Nothing in the wood, and nothing in the straw, Jacques?"

"Nothing."

"Let us collect them together, in the middle of the cell. So! Light them, you!"

The turnkey fired the little pile, which blazed high and hot. Stooping again to come out of the low-arched door, they left it burning, and retraced their way to the court-yard: seeming to recover their sense of hearing as they came down, until they were in the raging flood once more.

They found it surging and tossing, in quest of Defarge himself. Saint Antoine was clamorous to have its wine-shop-keeper foremost in the guard upon the governor who had defended the Bastille and shot the people. Otherwise, the governor would not be marched to the Hôtel de Ville for judgment. Otherwise, the governor would escape, and the people's blood (suddenly of some value, after many years of worthlessness) be unavenged.

In the howling universe of passion and contention that seemed to encompass this grim old officer conspicuous in his grey coat and red decoration, there was but one quite steady figure, and that was a woman's. "See, there is my husband!" she cried, pointing him out. "See Defarge!" She stood immovable close to the grim old officer, and remained immovable close to him; remained immovable close to him through the streets, as Defarge and the rest bore him along; remained immovable close to him when he was got near his destination, and began

to be struck at from behind ; remained immovable close to him when the long-gathering rain of stabs and blows fell heavy ; was so close to him when he dropped dead under it, that, suddenly animated, she put her foot upon his neck, and with her cruel knife—long ready—hewed off his head

The hour was come, when St. Antoine was to execute his horrible idea of hoisting up men for lamps to show what he could be and do. Saint Antoine's blood was up, and the blood of tyranny and domination by the iron hand was down—down on the steps of the Hôtel de Ville where the governor's body lay—down on the sole of the shoe of Madame Defarge where she had trodden on the body to steady it for mutilation. "Lower the lamp yonder !" cried Saint Antoine, after glaring round for a new means of death : "here is one of the soldiers to be left on guard !" The swinging sentinel was posted, and the sea rushed on.

The sea of black and threatening waters, and of destructive upheaving of wave against wave, whose depths were yet unfathomed and whose forces were yet unknown. The remorseless sea of turbulently swaying shapes, voices of vengeance, and faces hardened in the furnaces of suffering until the touch of pity could make no mark on them.

But, in the ocean of faces where every fierce and furious expression was in vivid life, there were two groups of faces—each seven in number—so fixedly contrasting with the rest, that never did sea roll which bore more memorable wrecks with it. Seven faces of prisoners, suddenly released by the storm that had burst their tomb, were carried high over head : all scared, all lost, all wondering and amazed, as if the Last Day were come, and those who rejoiced around them were lost spirits. Other seven faces there were, carried higher, seven dead faces, whose drooping eyelids and half-seen eyes awaited the Last Day. Impassive faces, yet with a suspended—not an abolished—expression on them ; faces, rather, in a fearful pause, as having yet to raise the dropped lids of the eyes, and bear witness with the bloodless lips, "THOU DIDST IT !"

Seven prisoners released, seven gory heads on pikes, the keys of the accursed fortress of the eight strong towers, some discovered letters and other memorials of prisoners of old time, long dead of broken hearts,—such, and such-like, the loudly echoing footsteps of Saint Antoine escort through the Paris streets in mid July, one thousand seven hundred and eighty-nine. Now, Heaven defeat the fancy of Lucie Darnay, and keep these feet far out of her life ! For, they are head-

long, mad, and dangerous; and in the years so long after the breaking of the cask at Defarge's wine-shop door, they are not easily purified when once stained red.

CHAPTER XXII.

The Sea Still Rises.

HAGGARD Saint Antoine had had only one exultant week, in which to soften his modicum of hard and bitter bread to such extent as he could, with the relish of fraternal embraces and congratulations, when Madame Defarge sat at her counter, as usual, presiding over the customers. Madame Defarge wore no rose in her head, for the great brotherhood of Spies, had become, even in one short week, extremely chary of trusting themselves to the saint's mercies. The lamps across his streets had a portentously elastic swing with them.

Madame Defarge, with her arms folded, sat in the morning light and heat, contemplating the wine-shop and the street. In both, were several knots of loungers, squalid and miserable, but now with a manifest sense of power enthroned on their distress. The raggedest night-cap, awry on the wretchedest head, had this crooked significance in it: "I know how hard it has grown for me, the wearer of this, to support life in myself; but do you know how easy it has grown for me, the wearer of this, to destroy life in you?" Every lean bare arm, that had been without work before, had this work always ready for it now, that it could strike. The fingers of the knitting women were vicious, with the experience that they could tear. There was a change in the appearance of Saint Antoine; the image had been hammering into this for hundreds of years, and the last finishing blows had told mightily on the expression.

Madame Defarge sat observing it, with such suppressed approval as was to be desired in the leader of the Saint Antoine women. One of her sisterhood knitted beside her. The short, rather plump wife of a starved grocer, and the mother of two children withal, this lieutenant had already earned the complimentary name of The Vengeance.

"Hark!" said The Vengeance. "Listen, then! Who comes?"

As if a train of powder laid from the outermost bound of the Saint Antoine Quarter to the wine-shop door, had been suddenly fired, a fast-spreading murmur came rushing along.

"It is Defarge," said madame. "Silence, patriots!"

Defarge came in breathless, pulled off a red cap he wore, and looked around him! "Listen, everywhere!" said madame again! "Listen to him!" Defarge stood, panting, against a background of eager eyes and open mouths, formed outside the door; all those within the wine-shop, had sprung to their feet.

"Say then, my husband. What is it?"

"News from the other world!"

"How, then?" cried madame, contemptuously. "The other world?"

"Does everybody here recal old Foulon who told the famished people that they might eat grass, and who died, and went to Hell?"

"Everybody!" from all throats.

"The news is of him. He is among us!"

"Among us!" from the universal throat again. "And dead?"

"Not dead! He feared us so much—and with reason—that he caused himself to be represented as dead, and had a grand mock-funeral. But they have found him alive, hiding in the country, and have brought him in. I have seen him but now, on his way to the Hôtel De Ville, a prisoner. I have said that he had reason to fear us. Say all! *Had* he reason?"

Wretched old sinner of more than threescore years and ten, if he had never known it yet, he would have known it in his heart of hearts, if he could have heard the answering cry.

A moment of profound silence followed. Defarge and his wife looked steadfastly at one another. The Vengeance stooped, and the jar of a drum was heard as she moved it at her feet behind the counter.

"Patriots!" said Defarge, in a determined voice, "are we ready?"

Instantly Madame Defarge's knife was in her girdle; the drum was beating in the streets, as if it and a drummer had flown together by magic; and The Vengeance, uttering terrific shrieks, and flinging her arms about her head like all the forty Furies at once, was tearing from house to house, rousing the women.

The men were terrible, in the bloody-minded anger with which they looked from windows, caught up what arms they had, and came pouring down into the streets: but, the women were a sight to chill the boldest. From such household occupations as their bare poverty yielded, from their children, from their aged and their sick crouching on the bare ground famished and naked, they ran out with streaming hair, urging one another, and themselves, to madness with the wildest cries and actions. Villain Foulon taken, my sister! Old Foulon taken, my

mother! Miscreant Foulon taken, my daughter! Then a score of others ran into the midst of these, beating their breasts, tearing their hair, and screaming, Foulon alive! Foulon who told the starving people they might eat grass! Foulon who told my old father that he might eat grass, when I had no bread to give him! Foulon who told my baby it might suck grass, when these breasts were dry with want! O mother of God, this Foulon! O Heaven, our suffering! Hear me, my dead baby and my withered father: I swear on my knees, on these stones, to avenge you on Foulon! Husbands, and brothers, and young men, Give us the blood of Foulon, Give us the head of Foulon, Give us the heart of Foulon, Give us the body and soul of Foulon, Rend Foulon to pieces, and dig him into the ground, that grass may grow from him! With these cries, numbers of the women, lashed into blind frenzy, whirled about, striking and tearing at their own friends until they dropped in a passionate swoon, and were only saved by the men belonging to them from being trampled under foot.

Nevertheless, not a moment was lost; not a moment! This Foulon was at the Hôtel De Ville, and might be loosed. Never, if Saint Antoine knew his own sufferings, insults, and wrongs! Armed men and women flocked out of the Quarter so fast, and drew even these last dregs after them with such a force of suction, that within a quarter of an hour there was not a human creature in Saint Antoine's besom but a few old crones and the wailing children.

No. They were all by that time choking the Hall of examination where this old man, ugly and wicked, was, and overflowing into the adjacent open space and streets. The Defarges, husband and wife, The Vengeance, and Jacques Three, were in the first press, and at no great distance from him in the Hall.

"See!" cried madame, pointing with her knife. "See the old villain bound with ropes. That was well done to tie a bunch of grass upon his back. Ha, ha! That was well done. Let him eat it now!" Madame put her knife under her arm, and clapped her hands as at a play.

The people immediately behind Madame Defarge, explaining the cause of her satisfaction to those behind them, and those again explaining to others, and those to others, the neighbouring streets resounded with the clapping of hands. Similarly, during two or three hours of drawl, and the winnowing of many bushels of words, Madame Defarge's frequent expressions of impatience were taken up, with marvellous quickness, at a distance: the more readily, because certain men who had by some wonderful exercise of agility climbed up the external architecture to look in from the windows, knew Madame

Defarge well, and acted as a telegraph between her and the crowd outside the building.

At length, the sun rose so high that it struck a kindly ray, as of hope or protection, directly down upon the old prisoner's head. The favour was too much to bear; in an instant the barrier of dust and chaff that had stood surprisingly long, went to the winds, and Saint Antoine had got him!

It was known directly, to the furthest confines of the crowd. Defarge had but sprung over a railing and a table, and folded the miserable wretch in a deadly embrace—Madame Defarge had but followed and turned her hand in one of the ropes with which he was tied—The Vengeance and Jacques Three were not yet up with them, and the men at the windows had not yet swooped into the Hall, like birds of prey from their high perches—when the cry seemed to go up, all over the city, "Bring him out! Bring him to the lamp!"

Down, and up, and head foremost on the steps of the building; now, on his knees; now, on his feet; now, on his back; dragged, and struck at, and stifled by the bunches of grass and straw that were thrust into his face by hundreds of hands; torn, bruised, panting, bleeding, yet always entreating and beseeching for mercy; now, full of vehement agony of action, with a small clear space about him as the people drew one another back that they might see; now, a log of dead wood drawn through a forest of legs; he was hauled to the nearest street corner where one of the fatal lamps swung, and there Madame Defarge let him go—as a cat might have done to a mouse—and silently and composedly looked at him while they made ready, and while he besought her: the women passionately screeching at him all the time, and the men sternly calling out to have him killed with grass in his mouth. Once, he went aloft, and the rope broke, and they caught him shrieking; twice, he went aloft, and the rope broke, and they caught him shrieking; then the rope was merciful and held him, and his head was soon upon a pike, with grass enough in the mouth for all Saint Antoine to dance at the sight of.

Nor was this the end of the day's bad work, for Saint Antoine so shouted and danced his angry blood up, that it boiled again, on hearing when the day closed in that the son-in-law of the despatched, another of the people's enemies and insulters, was coming into Paris under a guard five hundred strong, in cavalry alone. Saint Antoine wrote his crimes on flaring sheets of paper, seized him—would have torn him out of the breast of an army to bear Foulon company—set his head and heart on pikes, and carried the three spoils of the day, in Wolf-procession through the streets.



DRAGGED, AND STRUCK AT, AND STIFLED BY THE BUNCHES OF GRASS THAT WERE THRUST INTO HIS FACE.
—A Tale of Two Cities, Vol. Eleven, page 199.

Not before dark night did the men and women come back to the children, wailing and breadless. Then, the miserable bakers' shops were beset by long files of them patiently waiting to buy bad bread; and while they waited with stomachs faint and empty, they beguiled the time by embracing one another on the triumphs of the day, and achieving them again in gossip. Gradually, these strings of ragged people shortened and frayed away; and then poor lights began to shine in high windows, and slender fires were made in the streets, at which neighbours cooked in common, afterwards supping at their doors.

Scanty and insufficient suppers those, and innocent of meat, as of most other sauce to wretched bread. Yet, human fellowship infused some nourishment into the flinty viands, and struck some sparks of cheerfulness out of them. Fathers and mothers who had had their full share in the worst of the day, played gently with their meagre children; and lovers, with such a world around them and before them, loved and hoped.

It was almost morning, when Defarge's wine-shop parted with its last knot of customers, and Monsieur Defarge said to madame his wife, in husky tones, while fastening the door:

"At last it is come, my dear!"

"Eh well!" returned madame. "Almost."

Saint Antoine slept, the Defarges slept; even the Vengeance slept with her starved grocer, and the drum was at rest. The drum's was the only voice in Saint Antoine, that blood and hurry had not changed. The Vengeance, as custodian of the drum, could have wakened him up and had the same speech out of him as before the Bastille fell, or old Foulon was seized; not so with the hoarse tones of the men and women in Saint Antoine's bosom.

CHAPTER XXIII.

Fire Rises.

THERE was a change on the village where the fountain fell, and where the mender of roads went forth daily to hammer out of the stones of the highway such morsels of bread as might serve for patches to hold his poor ignorant soul and his poor reduced body, together. The prison on the crag was not so dominant as of yore; there were soldiers to guard it, but not many; there were officers to guard the soldiers, but not one of them knew what his men would do—beyond this; that it would probably not be what he was ordered.

Far and wide, lay a ruined country, yielding nothing but desolation. Every green leaf, every blade of grass and blade of grain, was as shrivelled and poor as the miserable people. Everything was bowed down, dejected, oppressed, and broken. Habitations, fences, domesticated animals, men, women, and children, and the soil that bore them—all worn out.

Monseigneur (often a most worthy individual gentleman) was a national blessing, gave a chivalrous tone to things, was a polite example to luxurious and shining life, and a great deal more to the equal purpose; nevertheless, Monseigneur as a class had, somehow or other, brought things to this. Strange that Creation, designed expressly for Monseigneur, should be so wrung dry and squeezed out! There must be something short-sighted in the eternal arrangements, surely! Thus it was, however; and the last drop of blood having been extracted from the flints, and the last screw of the rack having been turned so often that its purchase crumbled, and it now turned and turned and turned with nothing to bite, Monseigneur began to run away from a phenomenon so low and unaccountable.

But, this was not the change on the village, and on many a village like it. For scores of years gone by, Monseigneur had squeezed it and wrung it, and had seldom graced it with his presence except for the pleasures of the chase—now, found in hunting the people; now, found in hunting the beasts, for whose preservation Monseigneur made edifying spaces of barbarous and barren wilderness. No. The change consisted in the appearance of strange faces of low caste, rather than in the disappearance of the high-caste, chiselled, and otherwise beatified and beatifying features of Monseigneur.

For, in these times, as the mender of roads worked, solitary in the dust, not often troubling himself to reflect that dust he was and to dust he must return—being for the most part too much occupied in thinking how little he had for supper and how much more he would eat if he had it—in these times, as he raised his eyes from his lonely labour and viewed the prospect, he would see some rough figure approaching on foot, the like of which was once a rarity in those parts, but was now a frequent presence. As it advanced, the mender of roads would discern without surprise that it was a shaggy-haired man, of almost barbarian aspect, tall, in wooden shoes that were clumsy even to the eyes of a mender of roads, grim, rough, swart, steeped in the mud and dust of many highways, dank with the marshy moisture of many low grounds, sprinkled with the thorns and leaves and moss of many byways through woods.

Such a man came upon him, like a ghost, at noon in

the July weather, as he sat on his heap of stones under a bank, taking such shelter as he could get from a shower of hail.

The man looked at him, looked at the village in the hollow, at the mill, and at the prison on the crag. When he had identified these objects in what benighted mind he had, he said, in a dialect that was just intelligible :

“ How goes it, Jacques ? ”

“ All well, Jacques. ”

“ Touch then ! ”

They joined hands, and the man sat down on the heap of stones.

“ No dinner ? ”

“ Nothing but supper now, ” said the mender of roads, with a hungry face.

“ It is the fashion, ” growled the man. “ I meet no dinner anywhere. ”

He took out a blackened pipe, filled it, lighted it with flint and steel, pulled at it until it was in a bright glow ; then, suddenly held it from him and dropped something into it from between his finger and thumb, that blazed and went out in a puff of smoke.

“ Touch then. ” It was the turn of the mender of roads to say it this time, after observing these operations. They again joined hands.

“ To-night ? ” said the mender of roads.

“ To-night, ” said the man, putting the pipe in his mouth.

“ Where ? ”

“ Here. ”

He and the mender of roads sat on the heap of stones looking silently at one another, with the hail driving in between them like a pigmy charge of bayonets, until the sky began to clear over the village.

“ Show me ! ” said the traveller then, moving to the brow of the hill.

“ See ! ” returned the mender of roads, with extended finger. “ You go down here, and straight through the street, and past the fountain— ”

“ To the Devil with all that ! ” interrupted the other, rolling his eye over the landscape. “ I go through no streets and past no fountains. Well ? ”

“ Well ! About two leagues beyond the summit of that hill above the village. ”

“ Good. When do you cease to work ? ”

“ At sunset. ”

“ Will you wake me, before departing. I have walked two nights without resting. Let me finish my pipe, and I shall sleep like a child. Will you wake me ? ”

“ Surely. ”

The wayfarer smoked his pipe out, put it in his breast,

slipped off his great wooden shoes, and lay down on his back on the heap of stones. He was fast asleep directly.

As the road-mender plied his dusty labour, and the hail-clouds, rolling away, revealed bright bars and streaks of sky which were responded to by silver gleams upon the landscape, the little man (who wore a red cap now, in place of his blue one) seemed fascinated by the figure on the heap of stones. His eyes were so often turned towards it, that he used his tools mechanically, and, one would have said, to very poor account. The bronze face, the shaggy black hair and beard, the coarse woolen red cap, the rough medley dress of homespun stuff and hairy skins of beasts, the powerful frame attenuated by spare living, and the sullen and desperate compression of the lips in sleep, inspired the mender of roads with awe. The traveller had travelled far, and his feet were foot-sore, and his ankles chafed and bleeding; his great shoes, stuffed with leaves and grass, had been heavy to drag over the many long leagues, and his clothes were chafed into holes, as he himself was into sores. Stooping down beside him, the road-mender tried to get a peep at secret weapons in his breast or where not; but, in vain, for he slept with his arms crossed upon him, and set as resolutely as his lips. Fortified towns with their stockades, guard-houses, gates, trenches, and drawbridges, seemed, to the mender of roads, to be so much air as against this figure. And when he lifted his eyes from it to the horizon and looked around, he saw in his small fancy similiar figures, stopped by no obstacle, tending to centres all over France.

The man slept on, indifferent to showers of hail and intervals of brightness, to sunshine on his face and shadow, to the pattering lumps of dull ice on his body and the diamonds into which the sun changed them, until the sun was low in the west, and the sky was glowing. Then, the mender of roads having got his tools together and all things ready to go down into the village, roused him.

“Good!” said the sleeper, rising on his elbow. “Two leagues beyond the summit of the hill?”

“About.”

“About. Good!”

The mender of roads went home, with the dust going on before him according to the set of the wind, and was soon at the fountain, squeezing himself in among the lean kine brought there to drink, and appearing even to whisper to them in his whispering to all the village. When the village had taken its poor supper, it did not creep to bed, as it usually did, but came out of doors

again, and remained there. A curious contagion of whispering was upon it, and also, when it gathered together at the fountain in the dark, another curious contagion of looking expectantly at the sky in one direction only. Monsieur Gabelle, chief functionary of the place, became uneasy ; went out on his house-top alone, and looked in that direction too ; glanced down from behind his chimneys at the darkening faces by the fountain below, and sent word to the sacristan who kept the keys of the church, that there might be need to ring the tocsin by-and-by.

The night deepened. The trees environing the old château, keeping its solitary state apart, moved in a rising wind, as though they threatened the pile of building massive and dark in the gloom. Up the two terrace flights of steps the rain ran wildly, and beat at the great door, like a swift messenger rousing those within, uneasy rushes of wind went through the hall, among the old spears and knives, and passing lamenting up the stairs, and shook the curtains of the bed where the last Marquis had slept. East, West, North, and South, through the woods, four heavy-treading, unkempt figures crushed the high grass and cracked the branches, striding on cautiously to come together in the courtyard. Four lights broke out there, and moved away in different directions, and all was black again.

But not for long. Presently the Château began to make itself strangely visible by some light of its own, as though it were growing luminous. Then, a flickering streak played behind the architecture of the front, picking out transparent places, and showing where balustrades, arches, and windows were. Then it soared higher, and grew broader and brighter. Soon, from a score of the great windows, flames burst forth, and the stone faces, awakened, stared out of fire.

A faint murmur arose about the house from the few people who were left there, and there was saddling of a horse and riding away. There was spurring and splashing through the darkness, and bridle was drawn in the space by the village fountain, and the horse in a foam stood at Monsieur Gabelle's door. "Help, Gabelle! Help, every one!" The tocsin rang impatiently, but other help (if that were any) there was none. The mender of roads, and two hundred and fifty particular friends, stood with folded arms at the fountain, looking at the pillar of fire in the sky. "It must be forty feet high," said they, grimly ; and never moved.

The rider from the château, and the horse in a foam, clattered away through the village, and galloped up the stony steep, to the prison on the crag. At the gate, a group of officers were looking at the fire ; removed from

them, a group of soldiers. "Help, gentlemen-officers! The château is on fire; valuable objects may be saved from the flames by timely aid! Help, help!" The officers looked towards the soldiers who looked at the fire; gave no orders; and answered, with shrugs and biting of lips, "It must burn."

As the rider rattled down the hill again and through the street, the village was illuminating. The mender of roads, and the two hundred and fifty particular friends, inspired as one man and woman by the idea of lighting up, had darted into their houses, and were putting candles in every dull little pane of glass. The general scarcity of everything, occasioned candles to be borrowed in a rather peremptory manner of Monsieur Gabelle; and in a moment of reluctance and hesitation on that functionary's part, the mender of roads, once so submissive to authority, had remarked that carriages were good to make bonfires with, and that post-horses would roast.

The château was left to itself to flame and burn. In the roaring and raging of the conflagration, a red-hot wind, driving straight from the infernal regions, seemed to be blowing the edifice away. With the rising and falling of the blaze, the stone faces showed as if they were in torment. When great masses of stone and timber fell, the face with the two dints in the nose became obscured: anon struggled out of the smoke again, as if it were the face of the cruel Marquis, burning at the stake and contending with the fire.

The château burned; the nearest trees, laid hold of by the fire, scorched and shrivelled; trees at a distance, fired by the four fierce figures, begirt the blazing edifice with a new forest of smoke. Molten lead and iron boiled in the marble basin of the fountain; the water ran dry; the extinguisher tops of the towers vanished like ice before the heat, and trickled down into four rugged wells of flame. Great rents and splits branched out in the solid walls, like crystallisation; stupified birds wheeled about, and dropped into the furnace; four fierce figures trudged away, East, West, North, and South, along the night-enshrouded roads, guided by the beacon they had lighted, towards their next destination. The illuminated village had seized hold of the tocsin, and, abolishing the lawful ringer, rang for joy.

Not only that; but, the village, light-headed with famine, fire and bell-ringing, and bethinking itself that Monsieur Gabelle had to do with the collection of rent and taxes—though it was but a small instalment of taxes, and no rent at all, that Gabelle had got in in those latter days—became impatient for an interview with him, and, surrounding his house, summoned him to come forth for personal conference. Whereupon, Monsieur

Gabelle did heavily bar his door, and retire to hold counsel with himself. The result of that conference was, that Gabelle again withdrew himself to his house-top behind his stack of chimneys: this time resolved, if his door were broken in (he was a small Southern man of retaliative temperament), to pitch himself head foremost over the parapet, and crush a man or two below.

Probably, Monsieur Gabelle passed a long night up there, with the distant château for fire and candle, and the beating at his door, combined with the joy-ringing, for music; not to mention his having an ill-omened lamp slung across the road before his posting-house gate, which the village showed a lively inclination to displace in his favour. A trying suspense, to be passing a whole summer night on the brink of the black ocean, ready to take that plunge into it upon which Monsieur Gabelle had resolved! But, the friendly dawn appearing at last, and the rush-candles of the village guttering out, the people happily dispersed, and Monsieur Gabelle came down, bringing his life with him for that while.

Within a hundred miles, and in the light of other fires, there were other functionaries less fortunate, that night and other nights, whom the rising sun found hanging across once-peaceful streets, where they had been born and bred; also, there were other villagers and townspeople less fortunate than the mender of roads and his fellows, upon whom the functionaries and soldiery turned with success, and whom they strung up in their turn. But, the fierce figures were steadily wending East, West, North, and South, be that as it would; and whosoever hung, fire burned. The altitude of the gallows that would turn to water and quench it, no functionary, by any stretch of mathematics, was able to calculate successfully.

CHAPTER XXIV.

Drawn to the Loadstone Rock.

IN such risings of fire and risings of sea—the firm earth shaken by the rushes of an angry ocean which had now no ebb but was always on the flow, higher and higher, to the terror and wonder of the beholders on the shore—three years of tempest were consumed. Three more birthdays of little Lucie had been woven by the golden thread into the peaceful tissue of the life of her home.

Many a night and many a day had its inmates listened to the echoes in the corner, with hearts that failed them when they heard the thronging feet. For, the footsteps

had become to their minds as the footsteps of a people, tumultuous under a red flag and with their country declared in danger, changed into wild beasts by terrible enchantment long persisted in.

Monseigneur, as a class, had dissociated himself from the phenomenon of his not being appreciated : of his being so little wanted in France, as to incur considerable danger of receiving his dismissal from it and this life together. Like the fabled rustic who raised the Devil with infinite pains, and was so terrified at the sight of him that he could ask the Enemy no question, but immediately fled ; so, Monseigneur, after boldly reading the Lord's Prayer backwards for a great number of years, and performing many other potent spells for compelling the Evil One, no sooner beheld him in his terrors than he took to his noble heels.

The shining Bull's Eye of the Court was gone, or it would have been the mark for a hurricane of national bullets. It had never been a good eye to see with—had long had the mote in it of Lucifer's pride, Sardanapalus's luxury, and a mole's blindness—but it had dropped out and was gone. The Court, from that exclusive inner circle to its outermost rotting of intrigue, corruption, and dissimulation, was all gone together. Royalty was gone ; had been besieged in its Palace and "suspended," when the last tidings came over.

The August of the year one thousand seven hundred and ninety-two was come, and Monseigneur was by this time scattered far and wide.

As was natural, the head-quarters and great gathering-place of Monseigneur, in London, was Tellson's Bank. Spirits are supposed to haunt the places where their bodies most resorted, and Monseigneur without a guinea haunted the spot where his guineas used to be. Moreover, it was the spot to which such French intelligence as was most to be relied upon, came quickest. Again : Tellson's was a munificent house, and extended great liberality to old customers who had fallen from their high estate. Again : those nobles who had seen the coming storm in time, and, anticipating plunder or confiscation, had made provident remittances to Tellson's, were always to be heard of there by their needy brethren. To which it must be added that every new comer from France reported himself and his tidings at Tellson's, almost as a matter of course. For such variety of reasons Tellson's was at that time, as to French intelligence, a kind of High Exchange ; and this was so well known to the public, and the inquiries made there were in consequence so numerous, that Tellson's sometimes wrote the latest news out in a line or so and posted it in the Bank windows, for all who ran through Temple Bar to read.

On a steaming, misty afternoon, Mr. Lorry sat at his desk, and Charles Darnay stood leaning on it, talking with him in a low voice. The penitential den once set apart for interviews with the House, was now the news-Exchange, and was filled to overflowing. It was within half an hour or so of the time of closing.

"But, although you are the youngest man that ever lived," said Charles Darnay, rather hesitating, "I must still suggest to you—"

"I understand. That I am too old?" said Mr. Lorry.

"Unsettled weather, a long journey, uncertain means of travelling, a disorganised country, a city that may not even be safe for you."

"My dear Charles," said Mr. Lorry with cheerful confidence, "you touch some of the reasons for my going not for my staying away. It is safe enough for me, nobody will care to interfere with an old fellow of hard upon fourscore when there are so many people there much better worth interfering with. As to its being a disorganised city, if it were not a disorganised city there would be no occasion to send somebody from our House here to our House there, who knows the city and the business, of old, and is in Tellson's confidence. As to the uncertain travelling, the long journey, and the winter weather, if I were not prepared to submit myself to a few inconveniences for the sake of Tellson's, after all these years, who ought to be?"

"I wish I were going myself," said Charles Darnay, somewhat restlessly, and like one thinking aloud.

"Indeed! You are a pretty fellow to object and advise!" exclaimed Mr. Lorry. "You wish you were going yourself? And you a Frenchman born? You are a wise counsellor."

"My dear Mr. Lorry, it is because I am a Frenchman born, that the thought (which I did not mean to utter here, however) has passed through my mind often. One cannot help thinking, having had some sympathy for the miserable people, and having abandoned something to them," he spoke here in his former thoughtful manner, "that one might be listened to, and might have the power to persuade to some restraint. Only last night, after you had left us, when I was talking to Lucie—"

"When you were talking to Lucie," Mr. Lorry repeated. "Yes. I wonder you are not ashamed to mention the name of Lucie! Wishing you were going to France at this time of day!"

"However, I am not going," said Charles Darnay, with a smile. "It is more to the purpose that you say you are."

"And I am, in plain reality. The truth is, my dear Charles," Mr. Lorry glanced at the distant House, and

lowered his voice, "you can have no conception of the difficulty with which our business is transacted, and of the peril in which our books and papers over yonder are involved. The Lord above knows what the compromising consequences would be to numbers of people, if some of our documents were seized or destroyed; and they might be, at any time, you know, for who can say that Paris is not set a-fire to-day, or sacked to-morrow! Now, a judicious selection from these with the least possible delay, and the burying of them, or otherwise getting of them out of harm's way, is within the power (without loss of precious time) of scarcely any one but myself, if any one. And shall I hang back, when Tellson's knows this and says this—Tellson's, whose bread I have eaten these sixty years—because I am a little stiff about the joints? Why, I am a boy, sir, to half a dozen old codgers here!"

"How I admire the gallantry of your youthful spirit, Mr. Lorry!"

"Tut! Nonsense, sir!—And, my dear Charles," said Mr. Lorry, glancing at the House again, "you are to remember, that getting things out of Paris at this present time, no matter what things, is next to an impossibility. Papers and precious matters were this very day brought to us here (I speak in strict confidence; it is not business like to whisper it, even to you), by the strangest bearer—you can imagine, every one of whom had his head hanging on by a single hair as he passed the Barriers. At another time, our parcels will come and go, as easily as in business-like old England; but now, everything is stopped."

"And do you really go to-night?"

"I really go to-night, for the case has become too pressing to admit of delay."

"And do you take no one with you?"

"All sorts of people have been proposed to me, but I will have nothing to say to any of them. I intend to take Jerry. Jerry has been my body guard on Sunday nights for a long time past, and I am used to him. Nobody will suspect Jerry of being anything but an English bull-dog, or of having any design in his head but to fly at anybody who touches his master."

"I must say again that I heartily admire your gallantry and youthfulness."

"I must say again, nonsense, nonsense! When I have executed this little commission, I shall, perhaps, accept Tellson's proposal to retire and live at my ease. Time enough, then, to think about growing old."

This dialogue had taken place at Mr. Lorry's usual desk, with Monseigneur swarming within a yard or two of it, boastful of what he would do to avenge himself on

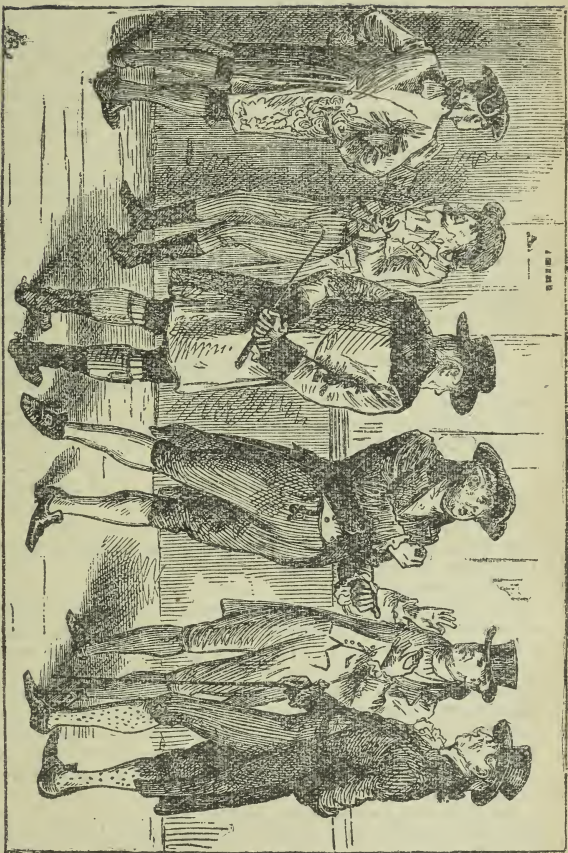
the rascal-people before long. It was too much the way of Monseigneur under his reverses as a refugee, and it was too much the way of native British orthodoxy, to talk of this terrible Revolution as if it were the one only harvest ever known under the skies that had not been sown—as if nothing had ever been done, or omitted to be done, that had led to it—as if observers of the wretched millions in France, and of the misused and perverted resources that should have made them prosperous, had not seen it inevitably coming, years before, and had not in plain words recorded what they saw. Such vapouring, combined with the extravagant plots of Monseigneur for the restoration of a state of things that had utterly exhausted itself, and worn out Heaven and earth as well as itself, was hard to be endured without some remonstrance by any sane man who knew the truth. And it was such vapouring all about his ears, like a troublesome confusion of blood in his own head, added to a latent uneasiness in his mind, which had already made Charles Darnay restless, and which still kept him so.

Among the talkers, was Stryver, of the King's Bench Bar, far on his way to state promotion, and, therefore, loud on the theme: broaching to Monseigneur, his devices for blowing the people up and exterminating them from the face of the earth, and doing without them: and for accomplishing many similar objects akin in their nature to the abolition of eagles by sprinkling salt on the tails of the race. Him, Darnay heard with a particular feeling of objection; and Darnay stood divided between going away that he might hear no more, and remaining to interpose his word, when the thing that was to be, went on to shape itself out.

The House approached Mr. Lorry, and laying a soiled and unopened letter before him, asked if he had yet discovered any traces of the person to whom it was addressed? The House laid the letter down so close to Darnay that he saw the direction—the more quickly, because it was his own right name. The address, turned into English, ran: "Very pressing. To Monsieur heretofore the Marquis St. Evrémonte, of France, confided to the cares of Messrs. Tellson and Co., Bankers, London, England."

On the marriage morning, Doctor Manette had made it his one urgent and express request to Charles Darnay, that the secret of his name should be—unless he, the Doctor, dissolved the obligation—kept inviolate between them. Nobody else knew it to be his name; his own wife had no suspicion of the fact; Mr. Lorry could have none.

"No," said Mr. Lorry, in reply to the House; "I have referred it, I think, to everybody now here, and no one can tell me where this gentleman is to be found."



AMONG THE TALKERS WAS STRYVER, OF THE KING'S BENCH BAR.
—A Tale of Two Cities, Vol. Eleven, page 211.

The hands of the clock verging upon the hour of closing the Bank, there was a general set of the current of talkers past Mr. Lorry's desk. He held the letter out inquiringly; and Monseigneur looked at it, in the person of this plotting and indignant refugee; and Monseigneur looked at it, in the person of that plotting and indignant refugee; and This, That, and The Other, all had something disparaging to say, in French or in English, concerning the Marquis who was not to be found.

"Nephew, I believe—but in any case degenerate successor—of the polished Marquis who was murdered," said one. "Happy to say, I never knew him."

"A craven who abandoned his post," said another—this Monseigneur had been got out of Paris, legs uppermost and half suffocated in a load of hay—"some years ago."

"Infected with the new doctrines," said a third, eyeing the direction through his glass in passing; "set himself in opposition to the last Marquis, abandoned the estates when he inherited them, and left them to the ruffian herd. They will recompense him now, I hope, as he deserves."

"Hey?" cried the blatant Stryver. "Did he though? Is that the sort of fellow? Let us look at his infamous name. D—n the fellow?"

Darnay, unable to restrain himself any longer, touched Mr. Stryver on the shoulder, and said:

"I know the fellow."

"Do you, by Jupiter?" said Stryver. "I am sorry for it."

"Why?"

"Why, Mr. Darnay? D'ye hear what he did? Don't ask, why, in these times."

"But I do ask why."

"Then I tell you again, Mr. Darnay, I am sorry for it. I am sorry to hear you putting any such extraordinary questions. Here is a fellow, who, infected by the most pestilent and blasphemous code of devilry that ever was known, abandoned his property to the vilest scum of the earth that ever did murder by wholesale, and you ask me why I am sorry that a man who instructs youth knows him. Well, but I'll answer you. I am sorry, because I believe there is contamination in such a scoundrel. That's why."

Mindful of the secret, Darnay with great difficulty checked himself and said: "You may not understand the gentleman."

"I understand how to put *you* in a corner, Mr. Darnay," said Bully Stryver, "and I'll do it. If this fellow is a gentleman, I *don't* understand him. You may tell him so, with my compliments. You may also tell him, from me, that after abandoning his worldly goods and

position to this butcherly mob, I wonder he is not at the head of them. But, no, gentlemen," said Stryver, looking all round, and snapping his fingers, "I know something of human nature, and I tell you that you'll never find a fellow like this fellow, trusting himself to the mercies of such precious *protégés*. No, gentlemen; he'll always show 'em a clean pair of heels very early in the scuffle, and sneak away."

With those words; and a final snap of his fingers, Mr. Stryver shouldered himself into Fleet-street, amidst the general approbation of his hearers. Mr. Lorry and Charles Darnay were left alone at the desk, in the general departure from the Bank.

"Will you take charge of the letter?" said Mr. Lorry. "You know where to deliver it?"

"I do."

"Will you undertake to explain that we suppose it to have been addressed here, on the chance of our knowing where to forward it, and that it has been here some time?"

"I will do so. Do you start for Paris from here?"

"From here, at eight."

"I will come back, to see you off."

Very ill at ease with himself, and with Stryver and most other men, Darnay made the best of his way into the quiet of the Temple, opened the letter, and read it. These were its contents:

"Prison of the Abbaye, Paris. June 21, 1792.

"MONSIEUR HERETOFORE THE MARQUIS

"After having long been in danger of my life at the hands of the village, I have been seized with great violence and indignity, and brought a long journey on foot to Paris. On the road I have suffered a great deal. Nor is that all; my house has been destroyed—razed to the ground.

"The crime for which I am imprisoned, Monsieur heretofore the Marquis, and for which I shall be summoned before the tribunal, and shall lose my life (without your so generous help), is, they tell me, treason against the majesty of the people, in that I have acted against them for an emigrant. It is in vain I represent that I have acted for them, and not against, according to your commands. It is in vain I represent that, before the sequestration of emigrant property, I had remitted the imposts they had ceased to pay; that I had collected no rent; that I had had recourse to no process. The only response is, that I have acted for an emigrant, and where is that emigrant?

"Ah! most gracious Monsieur heretofore the Marquis, where is that emigrant! I cry in my sleep where

is he! I demand of Heaven, will he not come to deliver me! No answer. Ah Monsieur heretofore the Marquis, I send my desolate cry across the sea, hoping it may perhaps reach your ears through the great bank of Tilson known at Paris!

“For the love of Heaven, of justice, of generosity, of the honour of your noble name, I supplicate you, Monsieur heretofore the Marquis, to succour and release me. My fault is, that I have been true to you. Oh Monsieur heretofore the Marquis, I pray you be you true to me!

“From this prison here of horror, whence I every hour tend nearer and nearer to destruction, I send you, Monsieur heretofore the Marquis, the assurance of my dolorous and unhappy service.

“Your afflicted,

“GABELLE.”

The latent uneasiness in Darnay's mind was roused to vigorous life by this letter. The peril of an old servant and a good servant, whose only crime was fidelity to himself and his family, stared him so reproachfully in the face, that, as he walked to and fro in the Temple considering what to do, he almost hid his face from the passers-by.

He knew very well, that in his horror of the deed which had culminated the bad deeds and bad reputation of the old family house, in his resentful suspicions of his uncle, and in the aversion with which his conscience regarded the crumbling fabric that he was supposed to uphold, he had acted imperfectly. He knew very well, that in his love for Lucie, his renunciation of his social place, though by no means new to his own mind, had been hurried and incomplete. He knew that he ought to have systematically worked it out and supervised it, and that he had meant to do it, and that it had never been done.

The happiness of his own chosen English home, the necessity of being always actively employed, the swift changes and troubles of the time which had followed on one another so fast, that the events of this week annihilated the immature plans of last week, and the events of the week following made all new again; he knew very well, that to the force of these circumstances he had yielded:—not without disquiet, but still without continuous and accumulating resistance. That he had watched the times for a time of action, and that they had shifted and struggled until the time had gone by, and the nobility were trooping from France by every highway and byway, and their property was in course of confiscation and destruction, and their very names were blotting out, was

as well known to himself as it could be to any new authority in France that might impeach him for it.

But, he had oppressed no man, he had imprisoned no man; he was so far from having harshly exacted payment of his dues, that he had relinquished them of his own will, thrown himself on a world with no favour in it, won his own private place there, and earned his own bread. Monsieur Gabelle had held the impoverished and involved estate on written instructions to spare the people, to give them what little there was to give—such fuel as the heavy creditors would let them have in the winter, and such produce as could be saved from the same grip in the summer—and no doubt he had put the fact in plea and proof, for his own safety, so that it could not but appear now.

This favoured the desperate resolution Charles Darnay had begun to make, that he would go to Paris.

Yes. Like the mariner in the old story, the winds and streams had driven him within the influence of the Loadstone Rock, and it was drawing him to itself, and he must go. Everything that arose before his mind drifted him on, faster and faster, more and more steadily, to the terrible attraction. His latent uneasiness had been, that bad aims were being worked out in his own unhappy land by bad instruments, and that he who could not fail to know that he was better than they, was not there, trying to do something to stay bloodshed, and assert the claims of mercy and humanity. With this uneasiness half stifled, and half reproaching him, he had been brought to the pointed comparison of himself with the brave old gentleman in whom duty was so strong; upon that comparison (injurious to himself), had instantly followed the sneers of Monseigneur, which had stung him bitterly, and those of Stryver, which above all were coarse and galling, for old reasons. Upon those, had followed Gabelle's letter: the appeal of an innocent prisoner, in danger of death, to his justice, honour, and good name.

His resolution was made. He must go to Paris.

Yes. The Loadstone Rock was drawing him, and he must sail on, until he struck. He knew of no rock; he saw hardly any danger. The intention with which he had done what he had done, even although he had left it incomplete, presented it before him in an aspect that would be gratefully acknowledged in France on his presenting himself to assert it. Then, that glorious vision of doing good, which is so often the sanguine mirage of so many good minds, arose before him, and he even saw himself in the illusion with some influence to guide this raging Revolution that was running so fearfully wild.

As he walked to and fro with his resolution made, he considered that neither Lucie nor her father must know of it until he was gone. Lucie should be spared the pain of separation; and her father, always reluctant to turn his thoughts towards the dangerous ground of old, should come to the knowledge of the step, as a step taken, and not in the balance of suspense and doubt. How much of the incompleteness of his situation was referable to her father, through the painful anxiety to avoid reviving old associations of France in his mind, he did not discuss with himself. But, that circumstance too, had had its influence in his course.

He walked to and fro, with thoughts very busy, until it was time to return to Tellson's, and take leave of Mr. Lorry. As soon as he arrived in Paris he would present himself to this old friend, but he must say nothing of his intention now.

A carriage with post-horses was ready at the Bank door, and was booted and equipped.

"I have delivered that letter," said Charles Darnay to Mr. Lorry. "I would not consent to your being charged with any written answer, but perhaps you will take a verbal one?"

"That I will, and readily," said Mr. Lorry, "if it is not dangerous."

"Not at all. Though it is to a prisoner in the Abbaye."

"What is his name?" said Mr. Lorry, with his open pocket-book in his hand.

"Gabelle."

"Gabelle. And what is the message to the unfortunate Gabelle in prison?"

"Simply, 'that he has received the letter, and will come.'"

"Any time mentioned?"

"He will start upon his journey to-morrow night."

"Any person mentioned?"

"No."

He helped Mr. Lorry to wrap himself in a number of coats and cloaks, and went out with him from the warm atmosphere of the old bank, into the misty air of Fleet-street.

"My love to Lucie, and to little Lucie," said Mr. Lorry at parting, "and take precious care of them till I come back." Charles Darnay shook his head and doubtfully smiled, as the carriage rolled away.

That night—it was the fourteenth of August—he sat up late, and wrote two fervent letters; one was to Lucie, explaining the strong obligation he was under to go to Paris, and showing her, at length, the reasons that he had, for feeling confident that he could become involved

in no personal danger there ; the other was to the Doctor, confiding Lucie and their dear child to his care, and dwelling on the same topics with the strongest assurances. To both, he wrote, that he would dispatch letters in proof of his safety, immediately after his arrival.

It was a hard day, that day of being among them, with the first reservation of their joint lives on his mind. It was a hard matter to preserve the innocent deceit of which they were profoundly unsuspecting. But, an affectionate glance at his wife, so happy and busy, made him resolute not to tell her what impended (he had been half moved to do it, so strange it was to him to act in anything without her quiet aid), and the day passed quickly. Early in the evening he embraced her, and her scarcely less dear namesake, pretending that he would return by-and-by (an imagined engagement took him out, and he had secretly made his wife of clothes ready), and so he emerged into the London mist of the heavy streets, with a heavier heart.

The unseen force was drawing him fast to itself, now, and all the tides and winds were setting straight and strong towards it. He left his two letters with a trusty porter, to be delivered half an hour before midnight, and no sooner ; took horse for Dover ; and began his journey. "For the love of Heaven, of justice, of generosity, of the honour of your noble name !" was the poor prisoner's cry with which he strengthened his sinking heart, as he left all that was dear on earth behind him, and floated away for the Loadstone Rock.

BOOK THE THIRD.—THE TRACK OF A STORM.

CHAPTER I.

In Secret.

THE traveller fared slowly on his way, who fared towards Paris from England in the autumn of the year one thousand seven hundred and ninety-two. More than enough of bad roads, bad equipages, and bad horses, he would have encountered to delay him, though the fallen and unfortunate King of France had been upon his throne in all his glory; but, the changed times were fraught with other obstacles than these. Every town-gate and village taxing-house had its band of citizen-patriots, with their national muskets in a most explosive state of readiness, who stopped all comers and goers, cross-questioned them, inspected their papers, looked for their names in lists of their own, turned them back, or sent them on, or stopped them and laid them in hold, as their capricious judgment or fancy deemed best for the dawning Republic One and Indivisible, of Liberty, Equality, Fraternity, or Death.

A very few French leagues of his journey were accomplished, when Charles Darnay began to perceive that for him along these country roads there was no hope of return until he should have been declared a good citizen at Paris. Whatever might befall now, he must on to his journey's end. Not a mean village closed upon him, not a common barrier dropped across the road behind him, but he knew it to be another iron door in the series that was barred between him and England. universal watchfulness so encompassed him, that if he had been taken in a net, or were being forwarded to his destination in a cage, he could not have felt his freedom more completely gone.

This universal watchfulness not only stopped him on the highway twenty times in a stage, but retarded his progress twenty times in a day, by riding after him and taking him back, riding before him and stopping him by anticipation, riding with him and keeping him in charge. He had been days upon his journey in France alone

when he went to bed tired out, in a little town on the high road, still a long way from Paris.

Nothing but the production of the afflicted Gabelle's letter from his prison of the Abbaye would have got him on so far. His difficulty at the guard-house in this small place had been such, that he felt his journey to have come to a crisis. And he was, therefore, as little surprised as a man could be to find himself awakened at the small inn to which he had been remitted until morning, in the middle of the night.

Awakened by a timid local functionary and three armed patriots in rough red caps and with pipes in their mouths, who sat down on the bed.

"Emigrant," said the functionary, "I am going to send you on to Paris, under an escort."

"Citizen, I desire nothing more than to get to Paris, though I could dispense with the escort."

"Silence!" growled a red-cap, striking at the coverlet with the butt-end of his musket. "Peace, aristocrat!"

"It is as the good patriot says," observed the timid functionary. "You are an aristocrat, and must have an escort—and must pay for it."

"I have no choice," said Charles Darnay.

"Choice! Listen to him!" cried the same scowling red-cap. "As if it was not a favour to be protected from the lamp-iron."

"It is always as the good patriot says," observed the functionary. "Rise and dress yourself, emigrant."

Darnay complied, and was taken back to the guard-house where other patriots in rough red caps were smoking, drinking, and sleeping, by a watch-fire. Here he paid a heavy price for his escort, and hence he started with it on the wet, wet roads at three o'clock in the morning.

The escort were two mounted patriots in red caps and tricoloured cockades, armed with national muskets and sabres, who rode one on either side of him. The escorted governed his own horse, but a loose line was attached to his bridle, the end of which one of the patriots kept girded round his wrist. In this state they set forth with the sharp rain driving in their faces: clattering at a heavy dragoon trot over the uneven town pavement, and out upon the mire-deep roads. In this state they traversed without change, except of horses and pace, all the mire-deep leagues that lay between them and the capital.

They travelled in the night, halting an hour or two after day-break, and lying by until the twilight fell. The escort were so wretchedly clothed, that they twisted straw round their bare legs, and thatched their ragged shoulders to keep the wet off. Apart from the personal

discomfort of being so attended, and apart from such considerations of present danger as arose from one of the patriots being chronically drunk, and carrying his musket very recklessly, Charles Darnay did not allow the restraint that was laid upon him to awaken any serious fears in his breast; for, he reasoned with himself that it could have no reference to the merits of an individual case that was not yet stated, and of representations, confirmable by the prisoner in the Abbaye, that were not yet made.

But when they came to the town of Beauvais—which they did at eventide, when the streets were filled with people—he could not conceal from himself that the aspect of affairs was very alarming. An ominous crowd gathered to see him dismount at the posting-yard, and many voices in it called out loudly, “Down with the emigrant!”

He stopped in the act of swinging himself out of his saddle, and, resuming it as his safest place, said:

“Emigrant, my friends! Do you not see me here, in France, of my own will?”

“You are a cursed emigrant,” cried a farrier, making at him in a furious manner through the press, hammer in hand; “and you are a cursed aristocrat!”

The postmaster interposed himself between this man and the rider’s bridle (at which he was evidently making), and soothingly said, “Let him be! let him be! He will be judged at Paris!”

“Judged!” repeated the farrier, swinging his hammer. “Ay! and condemned as a traitor.” At this, the crowd roared approval.

Checking the postmaster, who was for turning his horse’s head to the yard (the drunken patriot sat composedly in his saddle looking on, with the line round his wrist), Darnay said, as soon as he could make his voice heard:

“Friends, you deceive yourselves, or you are deceived. I am not a traitor.”

“He lies!” cried the smith. “He is a traitor since the decree. His life is forfeit to the people. His cursed life is not his own!”

At the instant when Darnay saw a rush in the eyes of the crowd, which another instant would have brought upon him, the postmaster turned his horse into the yard, the escort rode in close upon his horse’s flanks, and the postmaster shut and barred the crazy double gates. The farrier struck a blow upon them with his hammer, and the crowd groaned; but, no more was done.

“What is this decree that the smith spoke of?” Darnay asked the postmaster, when he had thanked them, and stood beside him in the yard.

“Truly, a decree for selling the property of emigrants.”

“When passed?”

“On the fourteenth.”

“The day I left England!”

“Everybody says it is but one of several, and that there will be others—if there are not already—banishing all emigrants, and condemning all to death who return. That is what he meant when he said your life was not your own.”

“But there are no such decrees yet?”

“What do I know!” said the postmaster, shrugging his shoulders; “there may be, or there will be. It is all the same. What would you have?”

They rested on some straw in a loft until the middle of the night, and then rode forward again when all the town was asleep. Among the many wild changes observable on familiar things which makes this wild ride unreal, not the least was the seeming rarity of sleep. After long and lonely spurring over dreary roads, they would come to a cluster of poor cottages, not steeped in darkness, but all glittering with lights, and would find the people, in a ghostly manner in the dead of the night, circling hand in hand round a shrivelled tree of Liberty, or all drawn up together singing a Liberty song. Happily, however, there was sleep in Beauvais that night to help them out of it, and they passed on once more into solitude and loneliness: jingling through the untimely cold and wet, among impoverished fields that had yielded no fruits of the earth that year, diversified by the blackened remains of burnt houses, and by the sudden emergence from ambush, and sharp reining up across their way, of patriot patrols on the watch on all the roads.

Daylight at last found them before the wall of Paris. The barrier was closed and strongly guarded when they rode up to it.

“Where are the papers of this prisoner?” demanded a resolute-looking man in authority, who was summoned out by the guard.

Naturally struck by the disagreeable word, Charles Darnay requested the speaker to take notice that he was a free traveller and French citizen, in charge of an escort which the disturbed state of the country had imposed upon him, and which he had paid for.

“Where,” repeated the same personage, without taking any heed of him whatever, “are the papers of this prisoner?”

The drunken patriot had them in his cap, and produced them. Casting his eyes over Gabelle’s letter, the same personage in authority showed some disorder

and surprise, and looked at Darnay with a close attention.

He left both escort and escorted without saying a word, however, and went into the guard-room; meanwhile, they sat upon their horses outside the gate. Looking about him while in this state of suspense, Charles Darnay observed that the gate was held by a mixed guard of soldiers and patriots, the latter far outnumbering the former; and that while ingress into the city for peasants' carts bringing in supplies, and for similar traffic and traffickers, was easy enough, egress, even for the homeliest people, was very difficult. A numerous medley of men and women, not to mention beasts and vehicles of various sorts, was waiting to issue forth; but, the previous identification was so strict that they filtered through the barrier very slowly. Some of these people knew their turn for examination to be so far off, that they lay down on the ground to sleep or smoke, while others talked together, or loitered about. The red cap and tricolor cockade were universal, both among men and women.

When he had sat in his saddle some half-hour, taking note of these things, Darnay found himself confronted by the same man in authority, who directed the guard to open the barrier. Then he delivered to the escort, drunk and sober, a receipt for the escorted, and requested him to dismount. He did so, and the two patriots, leading his tired horse, turned and rode away without entering the city.

He accompanied his conductor into a guard-room, smelling of common wine and tobacco, where certain soldiers and patriots, asleep and awake, drunk and sober, and in various neutral states between sleeping and waking, drunkenness and sobriety, were standing and lying about. The light in the guard-house, half derived from the waning oil-lamps of the night, and half from the overcast day, was in a correspondingly uncertain condition. Some registers were lying open on a desk, and an officer of a coarse dark aspect, presided over these.

"Citizen Defarge," said he to Darnay's conductor, as he took a slip of paper to write on. "Is this the emigrant Evrémonde?"

"This is the man."

"Your age, Evrémonde?"

"Thirty-seven."

"Married, Evrémonde?"

"Yes."

"Where married?"

"In England."

"Without doubt. Where is your wife, Evrémonde?"

"In England."

“Without doubt. You are consigned, Evrémonde, to the prison of La Force.”

“Just Heaven!” exclaimed Darnay. “Under what law, and for what offence?”

The officer looked up from his slip of paper for a moment.

“We have new laws, Evrémonde, and new offences, since you were here.” He said it with a hard smile, and went on writing.

“I entreat you to observe that I have come here voluntarily, in response to that written appeal of a fellow countryman which lies before you. I demand no more than the opportunity to do so without delay. Is not that my right?”

“Emigrants have no rights, Evrémonde,” was the stolid reply. The officer wrote until he had finished, read over to himself which he had written, sanded it, and handed it to Defarge, with the words “In secret.”

Defarge motioned with the paper to the prisoner that he must accompany him. The prisoner obeyed, and a guard of two armed patriots attended them.

“Is it you,” said Defarge, in a low voice, as they went down the guard-house steps and turned into Paris, “who married the daughter of Doctor Manette, once a prisoner in the Bastille that is no more.”

“Yes,” replied Darnay, looking at him with surprise.

“My name is Defarge, and I keep a wine-shop in the Quarter Saint Antoine. Possibly you have heard of me.”

“My wife came to your house to reclaim her father? Yes!”

The word “wife” seemed to serve as a gloomy reminder to Defarge, to say with sudden impatience, “In the name of that sharp female newly born and called La Guillotine, why did you come to France?”

“You heard me say why, a minute ago. Do you not believe it is the truth?”

“A bad truth for you,” said Defarge, speaking with knitted brows, and looking straight before him.

“Indeed, I am lost here. All here is so unprecedented, so changed, so sudden and unfair, that I am absolutely lost. Will you render me a little help?”

“None.” Defarge spoke, always looking straight before him.

“Will you answer me a single question?”

“Perhaps. According to its nature. You can say what it is.”

“In this prison that I am going to so unjustly, shall I have some free communication with the world outside?”

“You will see.”

"I am not to be buried there, prejudged, and without any means of presenting my case?"

"You will see. But, what then? Other people have been similarly buried in worse prisons, before now."

"But never by me, Citizen Defarge."

Defarge glanced darkly at him for answer, and walked on in a steady and set silence. The deeper he sank into this silence, the fainter hope there was—or so Darnay thought—of his softening in any slight degree. He, therefore, made haste to say:

"It is of the utmost importance to me (you know, Citizen, even better than I, of how much importance), that I should be able to communicate to Mr. Lorry of Tellson's Bank, an English gentleman who is now in Paris, the simple fact, without comment, that I have been thrown into the prison of La Force. Will you cause that to be done for me?"

"I will do," Defarge doggedly rejoined, "nothing for you. My duty is to my country and the People. I am the sworn servant of both, against you. I will do nothing for you."

Charles Darnay felt it hopeless to entreat him further, and his pride was touched besides. As they walked on in silence, he could not but see how used the people were to the spectacle of prisoners passing along the streets. The very children scarcely noticed him. A few passers turned their heads, and a few shook their fingers at him as an aristocrat; otherwise, that a man in good clothes should be going to prison, was no more remarkable than that a labourer in working clothes should be going to work. In one narrow, dark, and dirty street through which they passed, an excited orator, mounted on a stool, was addressing an excited audience on the crimes against the people, of the king and the royal family. The few words that he caught from the man's lips, first made it known to Charles Darnay that the king was in prison, and that the foreign ambassadors had one and all left Paris. On the road (except at Beauvais) he had heard absolutely nothing. The escort and the universal watchfulness had completely isolated him.

That he had fallen among far greater dangers than those which had developed themselves when he left England, he of course knew now. That perils had thickened about him fast, and might thicken faster and faster yet, he of course knew now. He could not but admit to himself that he might not have made this journey, if he could have foreseen the events of a few days. And yet his misgivings were not so dark as, imagined by the light of this later time, they would appear. Troubled as the future was, it was the unknown future, and in its obscurity there was ignorant hope. The horrible mas-

sacre, days and nights long, which, within a few rounds of the clock, was to set a great mark of blood upon the blessed garnering time of harvest, was as far out of his knowledge as if it had been a hundred thousand years away. The "sharp female newly born and called La Guillotine," was hardly known to him, or to the generality of people, by name. The frightful deeds that were to be soon done, were probably unimagined at that time in the brains of the doers. How could they have a place in the shadowy conceptions of a gentle mind?

Of unjust treatment in detention and hardship, and in cruel separation from his wife and child, he foreshadowed the likelihood, or the certainty; but, beyond this, he dreaded nothing distinctly. With this on his mind, which was enough to carry into a dreary prison courtyard, he arrived at the prison of La Force.

A man with a bloated face opened the strong wicket, to whom Defarge presented "The Emigrant Evrémonde."

"What the Devil! How many more of them!" exclaimed the man with the bloated face.

Defarge took his receipt without noticing the exclamation, and withdrew, with his two fellow-patriots.

"What the Devil, I say again!" exclaimed the gaoler, left with his wife. "How many more?"

The gaoler's wife, being provided with no answer to the question, merely replied, "One must have patience, my dear!" Three turnkeys who entered responsive to the bell she rang, echoed the sentiment, and one added, "For the love of Liberty!" which sounded in that place like an inappropriate conclusion.

The prison of La Force was a gloomy prison, dark and filthy, and with a horrible smell of foul sleep in it. Extraordinary how soon the noisome flavour of imprisoned sleep, becomes manifest in all such places that are ill-cared for!

"In secret, too," grumbled the gaoler, looking at the written paper. "As if I was not already full to bursting!"

He stuck the paper on a file, in an ill-humour, and Charles Darnay awaited his further pleasure for half an hour: sometimes, pacing to and fro in the strong arched room: sometimes, resting on a stone seat: in either case detained to be imprinted on the memory of the chief and his subordinates.

"Come!" said the chief, at length taking up his keys, "come with me, emigrant."

Through the dismal prison twilight, his new charge accompanied him by corridor and staircase, many doors clanging and locking behind them, until they came into a large, low, vaulted chamber, crowded with prisoners of both sexes. The women were seated at a long table,

reading and writing, knitting, sewing, and embroidering; the men were for the most part standing behind their chairs, or lingering up and down the room.

In the instinctive association of prisoners with shameful crime and disgrace, the new comer recoiled from this company. But, the crowning unreality of his long unreal ride, was, their all as one rising to receive him, with every refinement of manner known to the time, and with all the engaging graces and courtesies of life.

So strangely clouded were these refinements, by the prison manners and gloom, so spectral did they become in the inappropriate squalor and misery through which they were seen, that Charles Darnay seemed to stand in a company of the dead. Ghosts all! The ghost of beauty, the ghost of stateliness, the ghost of elegance, the ghost of pride, the ghost of frivolity, the ghost of wit, the ghost of youth, the ghost of age, all waiting their dismissal from the desolate shore, all turning on him eyes that were changed by the death they had died in coming there.

It struck him motionless. The gaoler standing at his side, and the other gaolers moving about, who would have been well enough as to appearance in the ordinary exercise of their functions, looked so extravagantly coarse contrasted with sorrowing mothers and blooming daughters who were there—with the apparitions of the coquette, the young beauty, and the mature woman delicately bred—that the inversion of all experience and likelihood which the scene of shadows presented was heightened to its utmost. Surely, ghosts all. Surely, the long unreal ride some progress of disease that had brought him to these gloomy shades!

“In the name of the assembled companions in misfortune,” said a gentleman of courtly appearance and address, coming forward, “I have the honour of giving you welcome to La Force, and of condoling with you on the calamity that has brought you among us. May it soon terminate happily! It would be an impertinence elsewhere, but it is not so here, to ask your name and condition?”

Charles Darnay roused himself, and gave the required information, in words as suitable as he could find.

“But I hope,” said the gentleman, following the chief gaoler with his eyes, who moved across the room, “that you are not in secret?”

“I do not understand the meaning of the term, but I have heard them say so.”

“Ah, what a pity! We so much regret it! But take courage; several members of our society have been in secret, at first, and it has lasted but a short time.” Then

he added, raising his voice, "I grieve to inform the society—in secret."

There was a murmur of commiseration as Charles Darnay crossed the room to a grated door where the gaoler awaited him, and many voices—among which, the soft and compassionate voices of women were conspicuous—gave him good wishes and encouragement. He turned at the grated door, to render the thanks of his heart; it closed under the gaoler's hand; and the apparitions vanished from his sight for ever.

The wicket opened on a stone staircase, leading upward. When they had ascended forty steps (the prisoner of half an hour already counted them), the gaoler opened a low black door, and they passed into a solitary cell. It struck cold and damp, but was not dark.

"Yours," said the gaoler.

"Why am I confined alone?"

"How do I know!"

"I can buy pen, ink, and paper?"

"Such are not my orders. You will be visited, and can ask then. At present, you may buy your food, and nothing more."

There were in the cell, a chair, a table, and a straw mattress. As the gaoler made a general inspection of these objects, and of the four walls, before going out, a wandering fancy wandered through the mind of the prisoner leaning against the wall opposite to him, that this gaoler was so unwholesomely bloated, both in face and person, as to look like a man who had been drowned and filled with water. When the gaoler was gone, he thought, in the same wandering way, "Now am I left, as if I were dead." Stopping then, to look down at the mattress, he turned from it with a sick feeling, and thought, "And here in these crawling creatures is the first condition of the body after death."

"Five paces by four and a half, five paces by four and a half, five paces by four and a half." The prisoner walked to and fro in his cell, counting its measurement, and the roar of the city rose like muffled drums with a wild swell of voices added to them. "He made shoes, he made shoes, he made shoes." The prisoner counted the measurement again, and paced faster, to draw his mind with him from that latter repetition. "The ghosts that vanished when the wicket closed. There was one among them, the appearance of a lady dressed in black, who was leaning in the embrasure of a window, and she had a light shining upon her golden hair, and she looked like * * * * Let us ride on again, for God's sake, through the illuminated villages with the people all awake! * * * * He made shoes, he made shoes, he made shoes. * * * * Five paces by four and a half."

With such scraps tossing and rolling upward from the depths of his mind, the prisoner walked faster and faster, obstinately counting and counting; and the roar of the city changed to this extent—that it still rolled in like muffled drums, but with the wail of voices that he knew, in the swell that rose above them.

CHAPTER II.

The Grindstone.

TELLSON'S Bank, established in the Saint Germain Quarter of Paris, was in a wing of a large house approached by a court-yard and shut off from the street by a high wall and a strong gate. The house belonged to a great nobleman who had lived in it until he made a flight from the troubles, in his own cook's dress, and got across the borders. A mere beast of the chase flying from hunters, he was still in his metempsychosis no other than the same Monseigneur, the preparation of whose chocolate for whose lips had once occupied three strong men besides the cook in question.

Monseigneur gone, and the three strong men absolving themselves from the sin of having drawn his high wages, by being more than ready and willing to cut his throat on the altar of the dawning Republic one and indivisible of Liberty, Equality, Fraternity, or Death, Monseigneur's house had been first sequestered, and then confiscated. For, all things moved so fast, and decree followed decree with that fierce precipitation, that now upon the third night of the autumn month of September, patriot emissaries of the law were in possession of Monseigneur's house, and had marked it with the tricolour, and were drinking brandy in its state apartments.

A place of business in London like Tellson's place of business in Paris, would soon have driven the House out of its mind and into the Gazette. For, what would staid British responsibility and respectability have said to orange-trees in boxes in a Bank court-yard, and even to a Cupid over the counter? Yet such things were. Tellson's had whitewashed the Cupid, but he was still to be seen on the ceiling, in the coolest linen, aiming (as he very often does) at money from morning to-night. Bankruptcy must inevitably have come of this young Pagan, in Lombard-street, London, and also of a curtained alcove in the rear of the immortal boy, and also of a looking-glass let into the wall, and also of clerks not at all old who danced in public on the slightest provocation. Yet, a French Tellson's could get on with these things

exceedingly well, and, as long as the times held together, no man had taken fright at them, and drawn out his money.

What money would be drawn out of Tellson's henceforth, and what would lie there, lost and forgotten; what plate and jewels would tarnish in Tellson's hiding-places, while the depositors rusted in prisons, and when they should have violently perished; how many accounts with Tellson's never to be balanced in this world, must be carried over into the next; no man could have said, that night, any more than Mr. Jarvis Lorry could, though he thought heavily of these questions. He sat by a newly lighted wood fire (the blighted and unfruitful year was prematurely cold), and on his honest and courageous face there was a deeper shade than the pendent lamp could throw, or any object in the room distortedly reflect—a shade of horror.

He occupied rooms in the Bank, in his fidelity to the House of which he had grown to be a part, like strong root-ivy. It chanced that they derived a kind of security from the patriotic occupation of the main building, but the true-hearted old gentleman never calculated about that. All such circumstances were indifferent to him, so that he did his duty. On the opposite side of the court-yard, under a colonnade, was extensive standing for carriages—where, indeed, some carriages of *Monseigneur* yet stood. Against two of the pillars were fastened two great flaring flambeaux, and, in the light of these, standing out in the open air, was a large grindstone: a roughly mounted thing which appeared to have hurriedly been brought there from some neighbouring smithy, or other workshop. Rising and looking out of window at these harmless objects, Mr. Lorry shivered, and retired to his seat by the fire. He had opened, not only the glass window, but the lattice blind outside it, and he had closed both again, and he shivered through his frame.

From the streets beyond the high wall and the strong gate, there came the usual night hum of the city, with now and then an indescribable ring in it, weird and unearthly, as if some unwonted sounds of a terrible nature were going up to Heaven.

"Thank God," said Mr. Lorry, clasping his hands, "that no one near and dear to me is in this dreadful town to-night. May He have mercy on all who are in danger!"

Soon afterwards, the bell at the great gate sounded, and he thought, "They have come back!" and sat listening. But, there was no loud irruption into the court-yard, as he had expected, and he heard the gate clash again, and all was quiet.

The nervousness and dread that were upon him inspired that vague uneasiness respecting the Bank, which a great charge would naturally awaken, with such feelings roused. It was well guarded, and he got up to go among the trusty people who were watching it, when his door suddenly opened, and two figures rushed in, at sight of which he fell back in amazement.

Lucie and her father! Lucie with her arms stretched out to him, and with that old look of earnestness so concentrated and intensified, that it seemed as though it had been stamped upon her face expressly to give force and power to it in this one passage of her life.

“What is this!” cried Mr. Lorry, breathless and confused. “What is the matter? Lucie! Manette! What has happened? What has brought you here? What is it?”

With the look fixed upon him, in her paleness and wildness, she panted out in his arms, imploringly, “O my dear friend. My husband!”

“Your husband, Lucie?”

“Charles.”

“What of Charles?”

“Here.”

“Here, in Paris?”

“Has been here, some days—three or four—I don’t know how many—I can’t collect my thoughts. An errand of generosity brought him here unknown to us; he was stopped at the barrier, and sent to prison.”

The old man uttered an irrepressible cry. Almost at the same moment, the bell of the great gate rang again, and a loud noise of feet and voices came pouring into the court-yard.

“What is that noise?” said the Doctor, turning towards the window.

“Don’t look!” cried Mr. Lorry. “Don’t look out! Manette, for your life, don’t touch the blinds!”

The Doctor turned, with his hand upon the fastening of the window, and said, with a cool bold smile:

“My dear friend, I have a charmed life in this city. I have been a Bastille prisoner. There is no patriot in Paris—in Paris? In France—who, knowing me to have been a prisoner in the Bastille, would touch me, except to overwhelm me with embraces, or carry me in triumph. My old pain has given me a power that has brought us through the barrier, and gained us news of Charles there, and brought us here. I knew it would be so; I knew I could help Charles out of all danger; I told Lucie so.—What is that noise?” His hand was again upon the window.

“Don’t look!” cried Mr. Lorry, absolutely desperate. “No, Lucie, my dear, nor you!” He got his arm round her, and held her. “Don’t be so terrified, my love. I

solemnly swear to you that I know of no harm having happened to Charles, that I had no suspicion even, of his being in this fatal place. What prison is he in?"

"La Force?"

"La Force! Lucie, my child, if ever you were brave and serviceable in your life—and you were always both—you will compose yourself now, to do exactly as I bid you: for, more depends upon it than you can think, or I can say. There is no help for you in any action on your part to-night; you cannot possibly stir out. I say this, because what I must bid you to do for Charles's sake, is the hardest thing to do of all. You must instantly be obedieent, still, and quiet. You must let me put you in a room at the back here. You must leave your father and me alone for two minutes, and as there are Life and Death in the world you must not delay."

"I will be submissive to you. I see in your face that you know I can do nothing else than this. I know you are true."

The old man kissed her, and hurried her into his room, and turned the key; then, came hurrying back to the Doctor, and opened the window and partly opened the blind, and put his hand upon the Doctor's arm, and looked out with him into the court-yard.

Looked out upon a throng of men and women: not enough in number, or near enough, to fill the court-yard: not more than forty or fifty in all. The people in possession of the house had let them in at the gate, and they had rushed in to work at the grindstone; it had evidently been set up there for their purpose, as in a convenient and retired spot.

But, such awful workers, and such awful work!

The grindstone had a double handle, and, turning at it madly were two men, whose faces, as their long hair flapped back when the whirlings of the grindstone brought their faces up, were more horrible and cruel than the visages of the wildest savages in their most barbarous disguise. False eyebrows and false moustaches were stuck upon them, and their hideous countenances were all bloody and sweaty, and all awry with howling, and all staring and glaring with beastly excitement and want of sleep. As these ruffians turned and turned, their matted locks now flung forward over their eyes, now flung backward over their necks, some women held wine to their mouths that they might drink; and what with dropping blood, and what with dropping wine, and what with the stream of sparks struck out of the stone, all their wicked atmosphere seemed gore and fire. The eye could not detect one creature in the group, free

from the smear of blood. Shouldering one another to get next at the sharpening-stone, were men stripped to the waist, with the stain all over their limbs and bodies; men in all sorts of rags, with the stain upon those rags; men devilishly set off with spoils of women's lace and silk and ribbon, with the stain dyeing those trifles through and through. Hatchets, knives, bayonets, swords, all brought to be sharpened, were all red with it. Some of the hacked swords were tied to the wrists of those who carried them, with strips of linen and fragments of dress: ligatures various in kind, but all deep of the one colour. And as the frantic wielders of these weapons snatched them from the stream of sparks and tore away into the streets, the same red hue was red in their frenzied eyes;—eyes which any unbrutalised beholder would have given twenty years of his life, to petrify with a well-directed gun.

All this was seen in a moment, as the vision of a drowning man, or of any human creature at any very great pass, could see a world if it were there. They drew back from the window, and the Doctor looked for explanation in his friend's ashy face.

"They are," Mr. Lorry whispered the words, glancing fearfully round at the locked room, "Murdering the prisoners. If you are sure of what you say; if you really have the power you think you have—as I believe you have—make yourself known to these devils, and get taken to La Force. It may be too late, I don't know, but let it not be a minute later!"

Doctor Manette pressed his hand, hastened bareheaded out of the room, and was in the court-yard when Mr. Lorry regained the blind.

His streaming white hair, his remarkable face, and the impetuous confidence of his manner, as he put the weapons aside like water, carried him in an instant to the heart of the concourse at the stone. For a few moments there was a pause, and a hurry, and a murmur, and the unintelligible sound of his voice; and then Mr. Lorry saw him, surrounded by all, and in the midst of a line twenty men long, all linked shoulder to shoulder, and hand to shoulder, hurried out with cries of "Live the Bastille prisoner! Help for the Bastille prisoner's kindred in La Force! Room for the Bastille prisoner in front there! Save the prisoner Evrémonde at La Force!" and a thousand answering shouts.

He closed the lattice again with a fluttering heart, closed the window and the curtain, hastened to Lucie, and told her that her father was assisted by the people, and gone in search of her husband. He found her child and Miss Pross with her; but, it never occurred to him to be surprised by their appearance until a long time

afterwards, when he sat watching them in such quiet as the night knew.

Lucie had, by that time, fallen into a stupor on the floor at his feet, clinging to his hand. Miss Pross had laid the child down on his own bed, and her head had gradually fallen on the pillow beside her pretty charge. O the long, long night, with the moans of the poor wife. And O the long, long night, with no return of her father and no tidings!

Twice more in the darkness the bell at the great gate sounded, and the irruption was repeated, and the grindstone whirled and spluttered. "What is it?" cried Lucie, affrighted. "Hush! the soldiers' swords are sharpened there," said Mr. Lorry. "The place is National property now, and used as a kind of armoury, my love."

Twice more in all; but the last spell of work was feeble and fitful. Soon afterwards the day began to dawn, and he softly detached himself from the clasping hand, and cautiously looked out again. A man, so besmeared that he might have been a sorely wounded soldier creeping back to consciousness on a field of slain, was rising from the pavement by the side of the grindstone, and looking about him with a vacant air. Shortly, this worn-out murderer descried in the imperfect light one of the carriages of Monseigneur, and, staggering to that gorgeous vehicle, climbed in at the door, and shut himself up to take his rest on its dainty cushions.

The great grindstone, Earth, had turned when Mr. Lorry looked out again, and the sun was red on the court-yard. But, the lesser grindstone stood alone there in the calm morning air, with a red upon it that the sun had never given, and would never take away.

CHAPTER III.

The Shadow.

ONE of the first considerations which arose in the business mind of Mr. Lorry when business hours came round, was this:—that he had no right to imperil Tellson's by sheltering the wife of an emigrant prisoner under the Bank roof. His own possessions, safety, life, he would have hazarded for Lucie and her child, without a moment's demur; but the great trust he held was not his own, and as to that business charge he was a strict man of business.

At first, his mind reverted to Defarge, and he thought of finding out the wine-shop again, and taking counsel

with its master in reference to the safest dwelling-place in the distracted state of the city. But, the same consideration that suggested him, repudiated him; he lived in the most violent Quarter, and doubtless was influential there, and deep in its dangerous workings.

Noon coming, and the Doctor not returning, and every minute's delay tending to compromise Tellson's, Mr. Lorry advised with Lucie. She said that her father had spoken of hiring a lodging for a short term, in that Quarter, near the Banking-house. As there was no business objection to this, and as he foresaw that even if it were all well with Charles, and he were to be released, he could not hope to leave the city, Mr. Lorry went out in quest of such a lodging, and found a suitable one, high up in a removed by-street where the closed blinds in all the other windows of a high melancholy square of buildings marked deserted homes.

To this lodging he at once removed Lucie and her child, and Miss Pross: giving them what comfort he could, and much more than he had himself. He left Jerry with them, as a figure to fill a doorway that would bear considerable knocking on the head, and returned to his own occupations. A disturbed and doleful mind he brought to bear upon them, and slowly and heavily the day lagged on with him.

It wore itself out, and wore him out with it, until the Bank closed. He was again alone in his room of the previous night, considering what to do next, when he heard a foot upon the stair. In a few moments, a man stood in his presence, who, with a keenly observant look at him, addressed him by his name.

"Your servant," said Mr. Lorry. "Do you know me?"

He was a strongly made man with dark curling hair, from forty-five to fifty years of age. For answer he repeated, without any change of emphasis, the words:

"Do you know me?"

"I have seen you somewhere."

"Perhaps at my wine-shop?"

Much interested and agitated, Mr. Lorry said: "You come from Doctor Manette?"

"Yes. I come from Doctor Manette."

"And what says he? What does he send me?"

Defarge gave into his anxious hand, an open scrap of paper. It bore the words in the Doctor's writing,

"Charles is safe, but I cannot safely leave this place yet. I have obtained the favour that the bearer has a short note from Charles to his wife. Let the bearer see his wife."

It was dated from La Force, within an hour.

"Will you accompany me," said Mr. Lorry, joyfully relieved after reading this note aloud, "to where his wife resides?"

"Yes," returned Defarge.

Scarcely noticing, as yet, in what a curiously reserved and mechanical way Defarge spoke, Mr. Lorry put on his hat and they went down into the court-yard. There, they found two women, one, knitting.

"Madame Defarge, surely!" said Mr. Lorry, who had left her in exactly the same attitude some seventeen years ago.

"It is she," observed her husband.

"Does Madame go with us?" inquired Mr. Lorry, seeing that she moved as they moved.

"Yes. That she may be able to recognise the faces and know the persons. It is for their safety."

Beginning to be struck by Defarge's manner, Mr. Lorry looked dubiously at him, and led the way. Both the women followed; the second woman being The Vengeance.

They passed through the intervening streets as quickly as they might, ascended the staircase of the new domicile, were admitted by Jerry, and found Lucie weeping, alone. She was thrown into a transport by the tidings Mr. Lorry gave her of her husband, and clasped the hand that delivered his note—little thinking what it had been doing near him in the night, and might, but for a chance, have done to him.

"DEAREST,—Take courage. I am well, and your father has influence around me. You cannot answer this. Kiss our child for me."

That was all the writing. It was so much, however, to her who received it, that she turned from Defarge to his wife, and kissed one of the hands that knitted. It was a passionate, loving, thankful, womanly action, but the hand made no response—dropped cold and heavy, and took to its knitting again.

There was something in its touch that gave Lucie a check. She stopped in the act of putting the note in her bosom, and, with her hands yet at her neck, looked terrified at Madame Defarge. Madame Defarge met the lifted eyebrows and forehead with a cold impassive stare.

"My dear," said Mr. Lorry, striking in to explain; "there are frequent risings in the streets; and, although it is not likely they will ever trouble you, Madame Defarge wishes to see those whom she has the power to protect at such times, to the end that she may know them—that she may identify them. I believe," said Mr.

Lorry, rather halting in his reassuring words, as the stony manner of all the three impressed itself upon him more and more, "I state the case, Citizen Defarge?"

Defarge looked gloomily at his wife, and gave no other answer than a gruff sound of acquiescence.

"You had better, Lucie," said Mr. Lorry, doing all he could to propitiate, by tone and manner, "have the dear child here, and our good Pross. Our good Pross, Defarge, is an English lady, and knows no French."

The lady in question, whose rooted conviction that she was more than a match for any foreigner, was not to be shaken by distress and danger, appeared with folded arms, and observed in English to The Vengeance, whom her eyes first encountered, "Well, I am sure, Boldface! I hope *you* are pretty well!" She also bestowed a British cough on Madame Defarge; but, neither of the two took much heed of her.

"Is that his child?" said Madame Defarge, stopping in her work for the first time, and pointing her knitting-needle at little Lucie as if it were the finger of Fate.

"Yes, madame," answered Mr. Lorry; "this is our poor prisoner's darling daughter and only child."

The shadow attendant on Madame Defarge and her party seemed to fall so threatening and dark on the child, that her mother instinctively kneeled on the ground beside her, and held her to her breast. The shadow attendant on Madame Defarge and her party seemed then to fall, threatening and dark, on both the mother and the child.

"It is enough, my husband," said Madame Defarge. "I have seen them. We may go."

But, the suppressed manner had enough of menace in it—not visible and presented, but indistinct and withheld—to alarm Lucie into saying, as she laid her appealing hand on Madame Defarge's dress:

"You will be good to my poor husband. You will do him no harm. You will help me to see him if you can?"

"Your husband is not my business here," returned Madame Defarge, looking down at her with perfect composure. "It is the daughter of your father who is my business here."

"For my sake, then, be merciful to my husband. For my child's sake! She will put her hands together and pray you to be merciful. We are more afraid of you than of these others."

Madame Defarge received it as a compliment, and looked at her husband. Defarge, who had been uneasily biting his thumb-nail and looking at her, collected his face into a sterner expression.

"What is it that your husband says in that little letter?" asked Madame Defarge, with a lowering smile.

“Influence ; he says something touching influence ?”

“That my father,” said Lucie hurriedly taking the paper from her breast, but with her alarmed eyes on her questioner and not on it, “has much influence around him.”

“Surely it will release him !” said Madame Defarge. “Let it do so.”

“As a wife and mother,” cried Lucie, most earnestly, “I implore you to have pity on me and not to exercise any power that you possess, against my innocent husband, but to use it in his behalf. O, sister-woman, think of me. As a wife and mother !”

Madame Defarge looked, coldly as ever, at the suppliant, and said, turning to her friend The Vengeance :

“The wives and mothers we have been used to see, since we were as little as this child, and much less, have not been greatly considered ? We have known *their* husbands and fathers laid in prison and kept from them, often enough ? All our lives, we have seen our sister-women suffer, in themselves and in their children, poverty, nakedness, hunger, thirst, sickness, misery, oppression and neglect of all kinds ?”

“We have seen nothing else,” returned The Vengeance.

“We have borne this a long time,” said Madame Defarge, turning her eyes again upon Lucie. “Judge you ! Is it likely that the trouble of one wife and mother would be much to us now ?”

She resumed her knitting and went out. The Vengeance followed. Defarge went last, and closed the door.

“Courage, my dear Lucie,” said Mr. Lorry, as he raised her. “Courage, courage ! So far all goes well with us—much, much better than it has of late gone with many poor souls. Cheer up, and have a thankful heart.”

“I am not thankless, I hope, but that dreadful woman seems to throw a shadow on me and on all my hopes.”

“Tut, tut !” said Mr. Lorry ; “what is this despondency in the brave little breast ? A shadow indeed ! No substance in it, Lucie.”

But the shadow of the manner of these Defarges was dark upon himself, for all that, and in his secret mind it troubled him greatly.

CHAPTER IV.

Calm in Storm.

DOCTOR MANETTE did not return until the morning of the fourth day of his absence. So much of what had happened in that dreadful time as could be kept from the knowledge of Lucie was so well concealed from her, that not until long afterwards when France and she were

wide apart, did she know that eleven hundred defenceless prisoners of both sexes and all ages had been killed by the populace; that four days and nights had been darkened by this deed of horror; and that the air around her had been tainted by the slain. She only knew that there had been an attack upon the prisons, that all political prisoners had been in danger, and that some had been dragged out by the crowd and murdered.

To Mr. Lorry, the Doctor communicated under an injunction of secrecy on which he had no need to dwell, that the crowd had taken him through a scene of carnage to the prison of La Force. That, in the prison he had found a self-appointed Tribunal sitting, before which the prisoners were brought singly, and by which they were rapidly ordered to be put forth to be massacred, or to be released, or (in a few cases) to be sent back to their cells. That, presented by his conductors to this Tribunal, he had announced himself by name and profession as having been for eighteen years a secret and an unaccused prisoner in the Bastille; that, one of the body so sitting in judgment had risen and identified him, and that this man was Defarge.

That, hereupon he had ascertained, through the registers on the table, that his son-in-law was among the living prisoners, and had pleaded hard to the Tribunal—of whom some members were asleep and some awake, some dirty with murder and some clean, some sober and some not—for his life and liberty. That, in the first frantic greetings lavished on himself as a notable sufferer under the overthrown system, it had been accorded to him to have Charles Darnay brought before the lawless Court, and examined. That, he seemed on the point of being at once released, when the tide in his favour met with some unexplained check (not intelligible to the Doctor), which led to a few words of secret conference. That the man sitting as President had then informed Doctor Manette that the prisoner must remain in custody, but should, for his sake, be held inviolate in safe custody. That, immediately, on a signal, the prisoner was removed to the interior of the prison again; but, that he, the Doctor, had then so strongly pleaded for permission to remain and assure himself that his son-in-law was, through no malice or mischance, delivered to the concourse whose murderous yells outside the gate had often drowned the proceedings, that he had obtained the permission, and had remained in that Hall of Blood until the danger was over.

The sights he had seen there, with brief snatches of food and sleep by intervals, shall remain untold. The mad joy over the prisoners who were saved, had astounded him scarcely less than the mad ferocity against

those who were cut to pieces. One prisoner there was, he said, who had been discharged into the street free, but at whom a mistaken savage had thrust a pike as he passed out. Being besought to go to him and dress the wound, the Doctor had passed out at the same gate, and had found him in the arms of a company of Samaritans, who were seated on the bodies of their victims. With an inconsistency as monstrous as anything in this awful nightmare, they had helped the healer, and tended the wounded man with the gentlest solicitude—had made a litter for him and escorted him carefully from the spot—had then caught up their weapons and plunged anew into a butchery so dreadful, that the Doctor had covered his eyes with his hands, and swooned away in the midst of it.

As Mr. Lorry received these confidences, and as he watched the face of his friend now sixty-two years of age, a misgiving arose within him that such dread experiences would revive the old danger. But, he had never seen his friend in his present aspect; he had never at all known him in his present character. For the first time the Doctor felt, now, that his suffering was strength and power. For the first time, he felt that in that sharp fire, he had slowly forged the iron which could break the prison door of his daughter's husband, and deliver him. "It all tended to a good end, my friend; it was not mere waste and ruin. As my beloved child was helpful in restoring me to myself, I will be helpful now in restoring the dearest part of herself to her; by the aid of Heaven I will do it!" Thus, Doctor Manette. And when Jarvis Lorry saw the kindled eyes, the resolute face, the calm strong look and bearing of the man whose life always seemed to him to have been stopped, like a clock, for so many years, and then set going again with an energy which had lain dormant during the cessation of its usefulness, he believed.

Greater things than the Doctor had at that time to contend with, would have yielded before his persevering purpose. While he kept himself in his place, as a physician whose business was with all degrees of mankind, bond and free, rich and poor, bad and good, he used his personal influence so wisely, that he was soon the inspecting physician of three prisons, and among them of La Force. He could now assure Lucie that her husband was no longer confined alone, but was mixed with the general body of prisoners; he saw her husband weekly, and brought sweet messages to her, straight from his lips; sometimes her husband himself sent a letter to her (though never by the Doctor's hand), but she was not permitted to write to him; for, among the many wild suspicions of plots in the prisoners, the wildest of

all pointed at emigrants who were known to have made friends or permanent connexions abroad.

This new life of the Doctor's was an anxious life, no doubt, still, the sagacious Mr. Lorry saw that there was a new sustaining pride in it. Nothing unbecoming tinged the pride ; it was a natural and worthy one ; but he observed it as a curiosity. The Doctor knew, that up to that time, his imprisonment had been associated in the minds of his daughter and his friend, with his personal affliction, deprivation, and weakness. Now that this was changed, and he knew himself to be invested through that old trial with forces to which they both looked for Charles's ultimate safety and deliverance, he became so far exalted by the change, that he took the lead and direction, and required them as the weak, to trust to him as the strong. The preceding relative positions of himself and Lucie were reversed, yet only as the liveliest gratitude and affection could reverse them, for he could have had no pride but in rendering some service to her who had rendered so much to him. "All curious to see," thought Mr. Lorry, in his amiably shrewd way, "but all natural and right ; so, take the lead, my dear friend, and keep it ; it couldn't be in better hands."

But, though the Doctor tried hard, and never ceased trying, to get Charles Darnay set at liberty, or at least to get him brought to trial, the public current of the time set too strong and fast for him. The new Era began ; the king was tried, doomed, and beheaded ; the Republic of Liberty, Equality, Fraternity, or Death, declared for victory or death against the world in arms ; the black flag waved night and day from the great towers of Notre-Dame ; three hundred thousand men, summoned to rise against the tyrants of the earth, rose from all the varying soils of France, as if the dragon's teeth had been sown broadcast, and had yielded fruit equally on hill and plain, on rock in gravel and alluvial mud, under the bright sky of the South and under the clouds of the North, in fell and forest, in the vineyards and the olive grounds and among the cropped grass and the stubble of the corn, along the fruitful banks of the broad rivers, and in the sand of the sea-shore. What private solicitude could rear itself against the deluge of the Year One of Liberty—the deluge rising from below, not falling from above, and with the windows of Heaven shut, not opened !

There was no pause, no pity, no peace, no interval of relenting rest, no measurement of time. Though days and nights circled as regularly as when time was young, and the evening and the morning were the first day, other count of time there was none. Hold of it was lost in the raging fever of a nation, as it is in the fever of

one patient. Now, breaking the unnatural silence of a whole city, the executioner showed the people the head of the king—and now, it seemed almost in the same breath, the head of his fair wife which had had eight weary months of imprisoned widowhood and misery, to turn it grey.

And yet, observing the strange law of contradiction which obtains in all such cases, the time was long, while it flamed by so fast. A revolutionary tribunal in the capital, and forty or fifty thousand revolutionary committees all over the land; a law of the Suspected, which struck away all security for liberty or life, and delivered over any good and innocent person to any bad and guilty one; prisons gorged with people who had committed no offence, and could obtain no hearing; these things became the established order and nature of appointed things, and seemed to be ancient usage before they were many weeks old. Above all, one hideous figure grew as familiar as if it had been before the general gaze from the foundations of the world—the figure of the sharp female called La Guillotine.

It was the popular theme for jests; it was the best cure for headache, it infallibly prevented the hair from turning grey, it imparted a peculiar delicacy to the complexion, it was the National Razor which shaved close. who kissed La Guillotine, looked through the little window and sneezed into the sack. It was the sign of the regeneration of the human race. It superseded the Cross. Models of it were worn on breasts from which the Cross was discarded, and it was bowed down to and believed in where the Cross was denied.

It sheared off heads so many, that it, and the ground it most polluted, were a rotten red. It was taken to pieces, like a toy-puzzle for a young Devil, and was put together again when the occasion wanted it. It hushed the eloquent, struck down the powerful, abolished the beautiful and good. Twenty-two friends of high public mark, twenty-one living and one dead, it had lopped the heads off, in one morning, in as many minutes.

Among these terrors, and the brood belonging to them, the Doctor walked with a steady head: confident in his power, cautiously persistent in his end, never doubting that he would save Lucie's husband at last. Yet the current of the time swept by, so strong and deep, and carried the time away so fiercely, that Charles had lain in prison one year and three months when the Doctor was thus steady and confident. So much more wicked and distracted had the Revolution grown in that December month, that the rivers of the South were encumbered with the bodies of the violently drowned by night, and prisoners were shot in lines and squares under the south-

ern wintry sun. Still, the Doctor walked among the terrors with a steady head. No man better known than he, in Paris at that day; no man in a stranger situation. Silent, humane, indispensable in hospital and prison, using his art equally among assassins and victims, he was a man apart. In the exercise of his skill, the appearance and the story of the Bastille Captive removed him from all other men. He was not suspected or brought in question, any more than if he had indeed been recalled to life some eighteen years before, or were a Spirit moving among mortals.

CHAPTER V.

The Wood-Sawyer.

ONE year and three months. During all that time Lucie was never sure, from hour to hour, but that the Guillotine would strike off her husband's head next day. Every day, through the stony streets, the tumbrils now jolted heavily, filled with Condemned. Lovely girls; bright women, brown-haired, black-haired, and grey, youths; stalwart men and old; gentle born and peasant born; all red wine for La Guillotine, all daily brought into light from the dark cellars of the loathsome prisons, and carried to her through the streets to slake her devouring thirst. Liberty, equality, fraternity, or death;—the last, much the easiest to bestow, O Guillotine!

If the suddenness of her calamity, and the whirling wheels of the time, had stunned the Doctor's daughter into awaiting the result in idle despair, it would but have been with her as it was with many. But, from the hour when she had taken the white head to her fresh young bosom in the garret of Saint Antoine, she had been true to her duties. She was truest to them in the season of trial, as all the quietly loyal and good will always be.

As soon as they were established in their new residence, and her father had entered on the routine of his avocations, she arranged the little household as exactly as if her husband had been there. Everything had its appointed place and its appointed time. Little Lucie she taught, as regularly, as if they had all been united in their English home. The slight devices with which she cheated herself into the show of a belief that they would soon be reunited—the little preparations for his speedy return, the setting aside of his chair and his books—these, and the solemn prayer at night for one dear prisoner especially, among the many unhappy souls in prison and the shadow of death—were almost the only outspoken reliefs of her heavy mind.

She did not greatly alter in appearance. The plain dark dresses, akin to mourning dresses, which she and her child wore, were as neat and as well attended to as the brighter clothes of happy days. She lost her colour, and the old intent expression was a constant, not an occasional, thing; otherwise, she remained very pretty and comely. Sometimes, at night, on kissing her father, she would burst into the grief she had repressed all day, and would say that her sole reliance, under Heaven, was on him. He always resolutely answered: "Nothing can happen to him without my knowledge, and I know that I can save him, Lucie."

They had not made the round of their changed life, many weeks, when her father said to her, on coming home one evening:

"My dear, there is an upper window in the prison, to which Charles can sometimes gain access at three in the afternoon. When he can get to it—which depends on many uncertainties and incidents—he might see you in the street, he thinks, if you stood in a certain place that I can show you. But you will not be able to see him, my poor child, and even if you could, it would be unsafe for you to make a sign of recognition."

"O show me the place, my father, and I will go there every day."

From that time, in all weathers, she waited there two hours. As the clock struck two, she was there, and at four she turned resignedly away. When it was not too wet or inclement for her child to be with her, they went together; at other times she was alone; but, she never missed a single day.

It was the dark and dirty corner of a small winding street. The hovel of a cutter of wood into lengths for burning, was the only house at that end; all else was wall. On the third day of her being there, he notified her.

"Good day, citizeness."

"Good day, citizen."

This mode of address was now prescribed by decree. It had been established voluntarily some time ago, among the more thorough patriots; but, it was now law for everybody.

"Walking here again, citizeness?"

"You see me, citizen!"

The wood-sawyer, who was a little man with a redundancy of gesture (he had once been a mender of roads), cast a glance at the prison, pointed at the prison, and putting his ten fingers before his face to represent bars, peeped through them jocosely.

"But it's not my business," said he. And went on sawing his wood.

Next day, he was looking out for her, and accosted her the moment she appeared.

"What! Walking here again, citizeness?"

"Yes, citizen."

"Ah! A child too! Your mother, is it not, my little citizeness?"

"Do I say yes, mamma?" whispered little Lucie, drawing close to her.

"Yes, dearest."

"Yes, citizen."

"Ah! But it's not my business. My work is my business. See my saw! I call it my Little Guillotine. La, la, la; La, la, la! And off his head comes!"

The billet fell as he spoke, and he threw it into a basket.

"I call myself the Sanson of the firewood guillotine. See here again! Loo, loo, loo; Loo, loo, loo! And off *her* head comes! Now, a child. Tickle, tickle; Pickle, pickle! And off *its* head comes. All the family!"

Lucie shuddered as he threw two more billets into his basket, but it was impossible to be there while the wood-sawyer was at work, and not be in his sight. Thenceforth, to secure his good will, she always spoke to him first, and often gave him drink-money, which he readily received.

He was an inquisitive fellow, and sometimes when she had quite forgotten him in gazing at the prison roof and grates, and in lifting her heart up to her husband, she would come to herself to find him looking at her, with his knee on his bench and his saw stopped in its work. "But it's not my business!" he would generally say at those times, and would briskly fall to his sawing again.

In all weathers, in the snow and frost of winter, in the bitter winds of spring, in the hot sunshine of summer, in the rains of autumn, and again in the snow and frost of winter, Lucie passed two hours of every day at this place; and every day, on leaving it, she kissed the prison wall. Her husband saw her (so she learned from her father) it might be once in five or six times; it might be twice or thrice running; it might be, not for a week or a fortnight together. It was enough that he could and did see her when the chances served, and on that possibility she would have waited out the day, seven days a week.

These occupations brought her round to the December month, wherein her father walked among the terrors with a steady head. On a lightly-snowing afternoon she arrived at the usual corner. It was a day of some wild rejoicing, and a festival. She had seen the houses as she came along, decorated with little pikes, and with little red caps stuck upon them; also, with tricoloured

ribbons ; also, with the standard inscription (tricoloured letters were the favourite), Republic One and Indivisible. Liberty, Equality, Fraternity, or Death !

The miserable shop of the wood-sawyer was so small, that its whole surface furnished very indifferent space for this legend. He had got somebody to scrawl it up for him, however, who had squeezed Death in with most inappropriate difficulty. On his house-top, he displayed pike and cap, as a good citizen must, and in a window he had stationed his saw, inscribed as his "Little Sainte Guillotine"—for the great sharp female was by that time popularly canonised. His shop was shut and he was not there, which was a relief to Lucie, and left her quite alone.

But he was not far off, for presently she heard a troubled movement and a shouting coming along, which filled her with fear. A moment afterwards, and a throng of people came pouring round the corner by the prison wall, in the midst of whom was the wood-sawyer hand in hand with The Vengeance. There could not be fewer than five hundred people, and they were dancing like five thousand demons. There was no other music than their own singing. They danced to the popular Revolution song, keeping a ferocious time that was like a gnashing of teeth in unison. Men and women danced together, women danced together, men danced together, as hazard had brought them together. At first, they were a mere storm of coarse red caps and coarser woollen rags ; but, as they filled the place, and stopped to dance about Lucie, some ghastly apparition of a dance-figure gone raving mad arose among them. They advanced, retreated, struck at one another's hands, clutched at one another's heads, spun round alone, caught one another and spun round in pairs, until many of them dropped. While those were down, the rest linked hand in hand, and all spun round together : then the ring broke, and in separate rings of two and four they turned and turned until they all stopped at once, began again, struck, clutched, and tore, and then reversed the spin, and all spun round another way. Suddenly they stopped again, paused, struck out the time afresh, formed into lines the width of the public way, and, with their heads low down and their hands high up, swooped screaming off. No fight could have been half so terrible as this dance. It was so emphatically a fallen sport—a something, once innocent, delivered over to all devilry—a healthy pastime changed into a means of angering the blood, bewildering the senses, and steeling the heart. Such grace as was visible in it, made it the uglier, showing how warped and perverted all things good by nature were be-

come. The maidenly bosom bared to this, the pretty almost-child's head thus distracted, the delicate foot mincing in this slough of blood and dirt, were types of the disjointed time.

This was the Carmagnole. As it passed, leaving Lucie frightened and bewildered in the doorway of the wood-sawyer's house, the feathery snow fell as quietly and lay as white and soft, as if it had never been.

"O my father!" for he stood before her when she lifted up the eyes she had momentarily darkened with her hand; "such a cruel, bad sight."

"I know, my dear, I know. I have seen it many times. Don't be frightened! Not one of them would harm you."

"I am not frightened for myself, my father. But when I think of my husband, and the mercies of these people—"

"We will set him above their mercies, very soon. I left him climbing to the window, and I came to tell you. There is no one here to see. You may kiss your hand towards that highest shelving roof."

"I do so, father, and I send him my Soul with it!"

"You cannot see him, my poor dear?"

"No, father," said Lucie, yearning and weeping as she kissed her hand, "no."

A footstep in the snow. Madame Defarge. "I salute you, citizeness," from the Doctor. "I salute you, citizen." This in passing. Nothing more. Madame Defarge gone, like a shadow over the white road.

"Give me your arm, my love. Pass from here with an air of cheerfulness and courage, for his sake. That was well done;" they had left the spot; "it shall not be in vain. Charles is summoned for to-morrow."

"For to-morrow?"

"There is no time to lose. I am well prepared, but there are precautions to be taken, that could not be taken until he was actually summoned before the Tribunal. He has not received the notice yet, but I know that he will presently be summoned for to-morrow, and removed to the Conciergerie; I have timely information. You are not afraid?"

She could scarcely answer, "I trust in you."

"Do so, implicitly. Your suspense is nearly ended, my darling; he shall be restored to you within a few hours; I have encompassed him with every protection. I must see Lorry."

He stopped. There was a heavy lumbering of wheels within hearing. They both knew too well what it meant. One. Two. Three. Three tumbrils faring away with their dread loads over the hushing snow.



THE CARMAGNOLE.
—A Tale of Two Cities, Vol. Eleven, page 247.

“I must see Lorry,” the Doctor repeated, turning her another way.

The staunch old gentleman was still in his trust; had never left it. He and his books were in frequent requisition as to property confiscated and made national. What he could save for the owners, he saved. No better man living to hold fast, by what Tellson's had in keeping, and to hold his peace.

A murky red and yellow sky, and a rising mist from the Seine, denoted the approach of darkness. It was almost dark when they arrived at the Bank. The stately residence of Monseigneur was altogether blighted and deserted. Above a heap of dust and ashes in the court, ran the letters: National Property. Republic One and Indivisible. Liberty, Equality, Fraternity, or Death.

Who could that be with Mr. Lorry—the owner of the riding-coat upon the chair—who must not be seen? From whom newly arrived, did he come out, agitated and surprised, to take his favourite in his arms? To whom did he appear to repeat her faltering words, when, raising his voice and turning his head towards the door of the room from which he had issued, he said: “Removed to the Conciergerie, and summoned for to-morrow.”

CHAPTER VI.

Triumph.

THE dread Tribunal of five Judges, Public Prosecutor, and determined Jury sat every day. Their lists went forth every evening, and were read out by the gaolers of the various prisons to their prisoners. The standard gaoler-joke was, “Come out and listen to the Evening Paper, you inside there!”

“Charles Evrémonde, called Darnay!”

So, at last, began the Evening Paper at La Force.

When a name was called, its owner stepped apart into a spot reserved for those who were announced as being thus fatally recorded. Charles Evrémonde, called Darnay, had reason to know the usage; he had seen hundreds pass away so.

His bloated gaoler, who wore spectacles to read with, glanced over them to assure himself that he had taken his place, and went through the list, making a similar short pause at each name. There were twenty-three names, but only twenty were responded to; for, one of the prisoners so summoned had died in gaol and been forgotten, and two had been already guillotined and forgotten. The list was read, in the vaulted chamber

where Darnay had seen the associated prisoners on the night of his arrival. Every one of those had perished in the massacre ; every human creature he had since cared for and parted with, had died on the scaffold.

There were hurried words of farewell and kindness, but the parting was soon over. It was the incident of every day, and the society of La Force were engaged in the preparations of some games of forfeits and a little concert, for that evening. They crowded to the grates and shed tears there ; but, twenty places in the projected entertainments had to be refilled, and the time was, at best, short to the lock-up hour, when the common rooms and corridors would be delivered over to the great dogs who kept watch there through the night. The prisoners were far from insensible or unfeeling ; there ways arose out of the condition of the time. Similarly, though with a subtle difference, a species of fervour or intoxication, known, without doubt, to have led some persons to brave the guillotine unnecessarily, and to die by it, was not mere boastfulness, but a wild infection of the wildly shaken public mind. In seasons of pestilence, some of us will have a secret attraction to the disease—a terrible passing inclination to die of it. And all of us have like wonders hidden in our breasts, only needing circumstances to evoke them.

The passage to the Conciergerie was short and dark ; the night in its vermin-haunted cells was long and cold. Next day, fifteen prisoners were put to the bar before Charles Darnay's name was called. All the fifteen were condemned, and the trials of the whole occupied an hour and a half.

“Charles Evrémonde, called Darnay,” was at length arraigned.

His Judges sat upon the Bench in feathered hats ; but the rough red cap and tricoloured cockade was the head-dress otherwise prevailing. Looking at the jury and the turbulent audience, he might have thought that the usual order of things was reversed, and that the felons were trying the honest men. The lowest, cruelest, and worst populace of a city, never without its quantity of low, cruel, and bad, were the directing spirits of the scene : noisily commenting, applauding, disapproving, anticipating, and precipitating the result, without a check. Of the men, the greater part were armed in various ways ; of the women, some wore knives, some daggers, some ate and drank as they looked on, many knitted. Among these last, was one, with a spare piece of knitting under her arm as she worked. She was in a front row, by the side of a man whom he had never seen since his arrival at the Barrier, but whom he directly remembered as Defarge. He noticed that she once or

twice whispered in his ear, and that she seemed to be his wife; but, what he most noticed in the two figures was, that although they were posted as close to himself as they could be, they never looked towards him. They seemed to be waiting for something with a dogged determination, and they looked at the Jury, but at nothing else. Under the President sat Doctor Manette, in his usual quiet dress. As well as the prisoner could see, he and Mr. Lorry were the only men there, unconnected with the Tribunal, who wore their usual clothes, and had not assumed the coarse garb of the *Carnagnole*.

Charles Evrémonde, called Darnay, was accused by the public prosecutor as an emigrant, whose life was forfeit to the Republic, under the decree which banished all emigrants on pain of Death. It was nothing that the decree bore date since his return to France. There he was, and there was the decree; he had been taken in France, and his head was demanded.

"Take off his head!" cried the audience. "An enemy to the Republic!"

The President rang his bell to silence those cries, and asked the prisoner whether it was not true that he had lived many years in England?

Undoubtedly it was.

Was he not an emigrant then? What did he call himself?

Not an emigrant, he hoped, within the sense and spirit of the law.

Why not? the President desired to know.

Because he had voluntarily relinquished a title that was distasteful to him, and a station that was distasteful to him, and had left his country—he submitted before the word emigrant in the present acceptation by the Tribunal was in use—to live by his own industry in England, rather than on the industry of the overladen people of France.

What proof had he of this?

He handed in the names of two witnesses: Théophile Gabelle, and Alexandre Manette.

But he had married in England? the President reminded him.

True but not an English woman.

A citizeness of France?

Yes. By birth.

Her name and family.

"Lucie Manette, only daughter of Doctor Manette, the good physician who sits there."

This answer had a happy effect upon the audience. Cries in exaltation of the well-known good physician rent the hall. So capriciously were the people moved, that tears immediately rolled down several ferocious

countenances which had been glaring at the prisoner a moment before, as if with impatience to pluck him out into the street and kill him.

On these few steps of his dangerous way, Charles Darnay had set his foot according to Doctor Manette's reiterated instructions. The same cautious counsel directed every step that lay before him, and had prepared every inch of his road.

The President asked why he had returned to France when he did, and not sooner?

He had not returned sooner, he replied, simply because he had no means of living in France, save those he had resigned; whereas, in England, he lived by giving instruction in the French language and literature. He had returned when he did, on the pressing and written entreaty of a French citizen, who represented that his life was endangered by his absence. He had come back to save a citizen's life, and to bear his testimony, at whatever personal hazard, to the truth. Was that criminal in the eyes of the Republic?

The populace cried enthusiastically, "No!" and the President rang his bell to quiet them. Which it did not, for they continued to cry "No!" until they left off, of their own will.

The President required the name of that Citizen? The accused explained that the citizen was his first witness. He also referred with confidence to the citizen's letter, which had been taken from him at the Barrier, but which he did not doubt would be found among the papers then before the President.

The Doctor had taken care that it should be there—had assured him that it would be there—and at this stage of the proceedings it was produced and read.

Citizen Gabelle was called to confirm it, and did so. Citizen Gabelle hinted, with infinite delicacy and politeness, that in the pressure of business imposed on the Tribunal by the multitude of enemies of the Republic—with which he had to deal, he had been slightly overlooked in his prison of the Abbaye—in fact, had rather passed out of the Tribunal's patriotic remembrance—until three days ago; when he had been summoned before it, and had been set at liberty on the Jury's declaring themselves satisfied that the accusation against him was answered, as to himself, by the surrender of the citizen Evrémonde, called Darnay.

Doctor Manette was next questioned. His high personal popularity, and the clearness of his answers, made a great impression; but, as he proceeded, as he showed that the Accused was his first friend on his release from his long imprisonment; that, the accused had remained in England, always faithful and devoted to his daughter

and himself in their exile ; that, so far from being in favour with the Aristocrat government there, he had actually been tried for his life by it, as the foe of England and friend of the United States—as he brought these circumstances into view, with the greatest discretion and with the straightforward force of truth and earnestness, the Jury and the populace became one. At last, when he appealed by name to Monsieur Lorry, an English gentleman then and there present, who, like himself, had been a witness on that English trial and could corroborate his account of it, the Jury declared that they had heard enough, and that they were ready with their votes if the President were content to receive them.

At every vote (the Jurymen voted aloud and individually), the populace set up a shout of applause. All the voices were in the prisoner's favour, and the President declared him free.

Then, began one of those extraordinary scenes with which the populace sometimes gratified their fickleness, or their better impulses towards generosity and mercy, or which they regarded as some set-off against their swollen account of cruel rage. No man can decide now to which of these motives such extraordinary scenes were referable ; it is probable, to a blending of all the three, with the second predominating. No sooner was the acquittal pronounced, than tears were shed as freely as blood at another time, and such fraternal embraces were bestowed upon the prisoner by as many of both sexes as could rush at him, that after his long and unwholesome confinement he was in danger of fainting from exhaustion ; none the less because he knew very well, that the very same people, carried by another current, would have rushed at him with the very same intensity, to rend him to pieces and strew him over the streets.

His removal, to make way for other accused persons who were to be tried, rescued him from these caresses for the moment. Five were to be tried together, next, as enemies of the Republic, forasmuch as they had not assisted it by word or deed. So quick was the Tribunal to compensate itself and the nation for a chance lost, that these five came down to him before he left the place, condemned to die within twenty-four hours. The first of them told him so, with the customary prison sign of Death—a raised finger—and they all added in words, " Long live the Republic ! "

The five had had, it is true, no audience to lengthen their proceedings, for when he and Doctor Manette emerged from the gate, there was a great crowd about it, in which there seemed to be every face he had seen

in Court—except two, for which he looked in vain. On his coming out, the concourse made at him anew, weeping, embracing, and shouting, all by turns and all together, until the very tide of the river on the bank of which the mad scene was acted, seemed to run mad, like the people on the shore.

They put him into a great chair they had among them, and which they had taken either out of the Court itself, or one of its rooms or passages. Over the chair they had thrown a red flag, and to the back of it they had bound a pike with a red cap on its top. In this car of triumph, not even the Doctor's entreaties could prevent his being carried to his home on men's shoulders, with a confused sea of red caps heaving about him, and casting up to sight from the stormy deep such wrecks of faces, that he more than once misdoubted his mind being in confusion, and that he was in the tumbril on his way to the Guillotine.

In wild dreamlike procession, embracing whom they met and pointing him out, they carried him on. Reddening the snowy streets with the prevailing Republican colour, in winding and tramping through them, as they had reddened them below the snow with a deeper dye, they carried him thus into the court-yard of the building where he lived. Her father had gone on before to prepare her, and when her husband stood upon his feet, she dropped insensible in his arms.

As he held her to his heart and turned her beautiful head between his face and the brawling crowd, so that his tears and her lips might come together unseen, a few of the people fell to dancing. Instantly all the rest fell to dancing, and the court-yard overflowed with the Carmagnole. Then, they elevated into the vacant chair a young woman from the crowd to be carried as the Goddess of Liberty, and then, swelling and overflowing out into the adjacent streets, and along the river's bank, and over the bridge, the Carmagnole absorbed them every one and whirled them away.

After grasping the Doctor's hand, as he stood victorious and proud before him; after grasping the hand of Mr. Lorry, who came panting in breathless from his struggle against the water-spout of the Carmagnole; after kissing little Lucie, who was lifted up to clasp her arms round his neck; and after embracing the ever zealous and faithful Pross who lifted her; he took his wife in his arms and carried her up to their rooms.

"Lucie! My own! I am safe."

"O dearest Charles, let me thank God for this on my knees as I have prayed to him."

They all reverently bowed their heads and hearts. When she was again in his arms, he said to her:

“And now speak to your father, dearest. No other man in all this France could have done what he has done for me.”

She laid her head upon her father's breast as she had laid his poor head on her own breast, long, long ago. He was happy in the return he had made her, he was recompensed for his suffering, he was proud of his strength. “You must not be weak, my darling,” he remonstrated; “don't tremble so. I have saved him.”

CHAPTER VII.

A Knock at the Door.

“I HAVE saved him.” It was not another of the dreams in which he had often come back; he was really here. And yet his wife trembled, and a vague but heavy fear was upon her.

All the air around was so thick and dark, the people were so passionately revengeful and fitful, the innocent were so constantly put to death on vague suspicion and black malice, it was so impossible to forget that many as blameless as her husband and as dear to others as he was to her, every day shared the fate from which he had been clutched, that her heart could not be as lightened of its load as she felt it ought to be. The shadows of the wintry afternoon were beginning to fall, and even now the dreadful carts were rolling through the streets. Her mind pursued them, looking for him among the Condemned; and then she clung closer to his real presence and trembled more.

Her father, cheering her, showed a compassionate superiority to this woman's weakness, which was wonderful to see. No garret, no shoemaking, no One Hundred and Five, North Tower, now! He had accomplished the task he had set himself, his promise was redeemed, he had saved Charles. Let them all lean upon him.

Their housekeeping was of a very frugal kind: not only because that was the safest way of life, involving the least offence to the people, but because they were not rich, and Charles, throughout his imprisonment, had had to pay heavily for his bad food, and for his guard, and towards the living of the poorer prisoners. Partly on this account, and partly to avoid a domestic spy, they kept no servant; the citizen and citizeness who acted as porters at the court-yard gate, rendered them occasional service; and Jerry (almost wholly transferred to

them by Mr. Lorry) had become their daily retainer, and had his bed there every night.

It was an ordinance of the Republic One and Indivisible of Liberty, Equality, Fraternity, or Death, that on the door or doorpost of every house, the name of every inmate must be legibly inscribed in letters of a certain size, at a certain convenient height from the ground. Mr. Jerry Cruncher's name, therefore, duly embellished the doorpost down below ; and, as the afternoon shadows deepened, the owner of that name himself appeared, from overlooking a painter whom Doctor Manette had employed to add to the list the name of Charles Evrémonde, called Darnay.

In the universal fear and distrust that darkened the time, all the usual harmless ways of life were changed. In the Doctor's little household, as in very many others, the articles of daily consumption that were wanted, were purchased every evening, in small quantities and at various small shops. To avoid attracting notice, and to give as little occasion as possible for talk and envy, was the general desire.

For some months past, Miss Pross and Mr. Cruncher had discharged the office of purveyors ; the former carrying the money ; the latter, the basket. Every afternoon at about the time when the public lamps were lighted, they fared forth on this duty, and made and brought home such purchases as were needful. Although Miss Pross, through her long association with a French family, might have known as much of their language as of her own, if she had had a mind, she had no mind in that direction ; consequently she knew no more of "that nonsense" (as she was pleased to call it), than Mr. Cruncher did. So her manner of marketing was to plump a noun-substantive at the head of a shopkeeper without any introduction in the nature of an article, and, if it happened not to be the name of the thing she wanted, to look round for that thing, lay hold of it, and hold on by it until the bargain was concluded. She always made a bargain for it, by holding up, as a statement of its just price, one finger less than the merchant held up, what his number might be.

"Now, Mr. Cruncher," said Miss Pross, whose eyes were red with felicity ; "if you are ready, I am."

Jerry hoarsely professed himself at Miss Pross's service. He had worn all his rust off long ago, but nothing would file his spiky head down.

"There's all manner of things wanted," said Miss Pross, "and we shall have a precious time of it. We want wine, among the rest. Nice toasts these Redheads will be drinking, wherever we buy it."

"It will be much the same to your knowledge, miss,

I should think," retorted Jerry, "whether they drink your health or the Old Un's."

"Who's he?" said Miss Pross.

Mr. Cruncher, with some diffidence, explained himself as meaning "Old Nicks."

"Ha!" said Miss Pross, "it doesn't need an interpreter to explain the meaning of these creatures. They have but one, and it's Midnight Murder, and Mischief."

"Hush, dear! Pray, pray be cautious!" cried Lucie.

"Yes, yes, yes, I'll be cautious," said Miss Pross; "but I may say among ourselves, that I do hope there will be no oniony and tobaccoey smotherings in the form of embracings all round, going on in the streets. Now, Ladybird, never you stir from that fire till I come back. Take care of the dear husband you have recovered, and don't move your pretty head from his shoulder as you have it now, till you see me again! May I ask a question, Doctor Manette, before I go?"

"I think you may take that liberty," the Doctor answered, smiling.

"For gracious sake, don't talk about Liberty; we have quite enough of that," said Miss Pross.

"Hush, dear! Again?" Lucie remonstrated.

"Well, my sweet," said Miss Pross, nodding her head emphatically, "the short and the long of it is, that I am a subject of His Most Gracious Majesty King George the Third;" Miss Pross curtseyed at the name; "and as such, my maxim is, Confound their politics, Frustrate their knavish tricks, On him our hopes we fix, God save the King!"

Mr. Cruncher, in an access of loyalty, growlingly repeated the words after Miss Pross, like somebody at church.

"I am glad you have so much of the Englishman in you, though I wish you had never taken that cold in your voice," said Miss Pross, approvingly. "But the question, Doctor Manette. Is there"—it was the good creature's way to affect to make light of anything that was a great anxiety with them all, and to come at it in this chance manner—"is there any prospect yet, of our getting out of this place?"

"I fear not yet. It would be dangerous for Charles yet."

"Heigh-ho-hum!" said Miss Pross, cheerfully representing a sigh as she glanced at her darling's golden hair in the light of the fire, "then we must have patience and wait: that's all. We must hold up our heads and fight low, as my brother Solomon used to say. Now, Mr. Cruncher!—Don't you move, Ladybird!"

They went out, leaving Lucie, and her husband, her father, and the child, by a bright fire. Mr. Lorry was

expected back presently from the Banking House. Miss Pross had lighted the lamp, but had put it aside in a corner, that they might enjoy the firelight undisturbed. Little Lucie sat by her grandfather with her hands clasped through his arm; and he, in a tone not rising much above a whisper, began to tell her a story of a great and powerful Fairy who had opened a prison-wall and let out a captive who had once done the Fairy a service. All was subdued and quiet, and Lucie was more at ease than she had been.

“What is that!” she cried, all at once.

“My dear!” said her father, stopping in his story, and laying his hand on hers, “command yourself. What a disordered state you are in! The least thing—nothing—startles you. *You*, your father’s daughter?”

“I thought, my father,” said Lucie, excusing herself, with a pale face and in a faltering voice, “that I heard strange feet upon the stairs.”

“My love, the staircase is as still as Death.”

As he said the word, a blow was struck upon the door.

“O father, father. What can this be! Hide Charles. Save him!”

“My child,” said the Doctor, rising and laying his hand upon her shoulder, “I *have* saved him. What weakness is this, my dear! Let me go to the door.”

He took the lamp in his hand, crossed the two intervening outer rooms, and opened it. A rude clattering of feet over the floors, and four rough men in red caps, armed with sabres and pistols, entered the room.

“The Citizen Evrémonde, called Darnay,” said the first.

“Who seeks him?” answered Darnay.

“I seek him. We seek him. I know you, Evrémonde; I saw you before the Tribunal to-day. You are again the prisoner of the Republic.”

The four surrounded him, where he stood with his wife and child clinging to him.

“Tell me how and why I am again a prisoner?”

“It is enough that you return straight to the Conciergerie, and will know to-morrow. You are summoned for to-morrow.”

Dr. Manette, whom this visitation had so turned into stone, that he stood with the lamp in his hand, as if he were a statue made to hold it, moved after these words were spoken, put the lamp down, and confronting the speaker, and taking him, not ungently, by the loose front of his red woollen shirt, said:

“You know him, you have said. Do you know me?”

“Yes, I know you, Citizen Doctor.”

“We all know you, Citizen Doctor,” said the other three.

He looked abstractedly from one to another, and said, in a lower voice, after a pause :

“ Will you answer his question to me then ? How does this happen ? ”

“ Citizen Doctor,” said the first, reluctantly ; “ he has been denounced to the Section of Saint Antoine. This citizen,” pointing out the second who had entered, “ is from Saint Antoine. ”

The citizen here indicated nodded his head, and added :

“ He is accused by Saint Antoine. ”

“ Of what ? ” asked the Doctor.

“ Citizen Doctor,” said the first, with his former reluctance, “ ask no more. If the Republic demands sacrifices from you, without doubt you as a good patriot will be happy to make them. The Republic goes before all. The People is supreme. Evrémonde, we are pressed. ”

“ One word,” the Doctor entreated. “ Will you tell me who denounced him ? ”

“ It is against rule,” answered the first ; “ but you can ask Him of Saint Antoine here. ”

The Doctor turned his eyes upon that man. Who moved uneasily on his feet, rubbed his beard a little, and at length said :

“ Well ! Truly it is against rule. But he is denounced—and gravely—by the Citizen and Citizeness Defarge. And by one other. ”

“ What other ? ”

“ Do *you* ask, Citizen Doctor ? ”

“ Yes. ”

“ Then,” said he of Saint Antoine, with a strange look, “ you will be answered to-morrow. Now, I am dumb ! ”

CHAPTER VIII.

A Hand at Cards.

HAPPILY unconscious of the new calamity at home, Miss Pross threaded her way along the narrow streets and crossed the river by the bridge of the Pont-Neuf, reckoning in her mind the number of indispensable purchases she had to make. Mr. Cruncher, with the basket, walked at her side. They both looked to the right and to the left into most of the shops they passed, had a wary eye for all gregarious assemblages of people, and turned out of their road to avoid any very excited group of talkers. It was a raw evening, and the misty river, blurred to the eye with blazing lights, and to the ear

with harsh noises, showed where the barges were stationed in which the smiths worked, making guns for the Army of the Republic. Woe to the man who played tricks with *that* Army, or got undeserved promotion in it! Better for him that his beard had never grown, for the National Razor shaved him close.

Having purchased a few small articles of grocery, and a measure of oil for the lamp, Miss Pross bethought herself of the wine they wanted. After peeping into several wine-shops, she stopped at the sign of The Good Republican Brutus of Antiquity, not far from the National Palace, once (and twice) the Tuileries, where the aspect of things rather took her fancy. It had a quieter look than any other place of the same description they had passed, and, though red with patriotic caps, was not so red as the rest. Sounding Mr. Cruncher and finding him of her opinion, Miss Pross resorted to the Good Republican Brutus of Antiquity, attended by her cavalier.

Slightly observant of the smoky lights; of the people pipe in mouth, playing with limp cards and yellow dominoes; of the one bare-breasted, bare-armed, soot-begrimed workman reading a journal aloud, and of the others listening to him; of the weapons worn, or laid aside to be resumed; of the two or three customers fallen forward asleep, who in the popular, high-shouldered, shaggy black spencer looked, in that attitude, like slumbering bears or dogs; the two outlandish customers approached the counter, and showed what they wanted.

As their wine was measuring out, a man parted from another man in a corner, and rose to depart. In going, he had to face Miss Pross. No sooner did he face her, than Miss Pross uttered a scream, and clapped her hands.

In a moment, the whole company were on their feet. That somebody was assassinated by somebody vindicating a difference of opinion, was the likeliest occurrence. Everybody looked to see somebody fall, but only saw a man and women standing staring at each other; the man with all the outward aspect of a Frenchman and a thorough Republican; the woman, evidently English.

What was said in this disappointing anti-climax, by the disciples of the Good Republican Brutus of Antiquity, except that it was something very voluble and loud, would have been as so much Hebrew or Chaldean to Miss Pross and her protector, though they had been all ears. But, they had no ears for anything in their surprise. For it must be recorded, that not only was Miss Pross lost in amazement and agitation; but, Mr. Cruncher—though it seemed on his own separate and individual account—was in a state of the greatest wonder.

“What is the matter?” said the man who had caused Miss Pross to scream; speaking in a vexed abrupt voice (though in a low tone), and in English.

“Oh, Solomon, dear Solomon!” cried Miss Pross, clapping her hands again. “After not setting eyes upon you or hearing of you for so long a time, do I find you here!”

“Don’t call me Solomon. Do you want to be the death of me?” asked the man, in a furtive frightened way.

“Brother, brother!” cried Miss Pross, bursting into tears. “Have I ever been so hard with you that you ask me such a cruel question!”

“Then hold your meddlesome tongue,” said Solomon, “and come out, if you want to speak to me. Pay for your wine, and come out. Who’s this man?”

Miss Pross shaking her loving and dejected head at her by no means affectionate brother, said, through her tears, “Mr. Cruncher.”

“Let him come out too,” said Solomon. “Does he think me a ghost?”

Apparently, Mr. Cruncher did, to judge from his looks. He said not a word, however, and Miss Pross, exploring the depths of her reticule through her tears with great difficulty, paid for the wine. As she did so, Solomon turned to the followers of the Good Republican Brutus of Antiquity, and offered a few words of explanation in the French language, which caused them all to relapse into their former places and pursuits.

“Now,” said Solomon, stopping at the dark street corner, “what do you want?”

“How dreadfully unkind in a brother nothing has ever turned my love away from!” cried Miss Pross, “to give me such a greeting, and show me no affection.”

“There. Con-found it! There,” said Solomon, making a dab at Miss Pross’s lips with his own. “Now are you content?”

Miss Pross only shook her head and wept in silence.

“If you expect me to be surprised,” said her brother Solomon, “I am not surprised,” I knew you were here; I know of most people who are here. If you really don’t want to endanger my existence—which I half believe you do—go your ways as soon as possible, and let me go mine. I am busy. I am an official.”

“My English brother Solomon,” mourned Miss Pross, casting up her tear-fraught eyes, “that had the makings in him of one of the best and greatest of men in his native country, an official among foreigners, and such foreigners! I would almost sooner have seen the dear boy lying in his—”

“I said so!” cried her brother, interrupting. “I

knew it! You want to be the death of me. I shall be rendered Suspected, by my own sister. Just as I am getting on!"

"The gracious and merciful Heavens forbid!" cried Miss Pross. "Far rather would I never see you again, dear Solomon, though I have ever loved you truly, and ever shall. Say but one affectionate word to me, and tell me there is nothing angry or estranged between us, and I will detain you no longer."

Good Miss Pross! As if the estrangement between them had come of any culpability of hers. As if Mr. Lorry had not known it for a fact, years ago, in the quiet corner in Soho, that this precious brother had spent her money and left her!

He was saying the affectionate word, however, with a far more grudging condescension and patronage than he could have shown if their relative merits and positions had been reversed (which is invariably the case, all the world over), when Mr. Cruncher, touching him on the shoulder, hoarsely and unexpectedly interposed with the following singular question:

"I say! Might I ask the favour? As to whether your name is John Solomon, or Solomon John?"

The official turned towards him with sudden distrust. He had not previously uttered a word.

"Come!" said Mr. Cruncher. "Speak out, you know." (Which, by the way, was more than he could do himself.) "John Solomon, or Solomon John? She calls you Solomon, and she must know, being your sister. And I know you're John, you know. Which of the two goes first? And regarding that name of Pross, likewise. That warn't your name over the water."

"What do you mean?"

"Well, I don't know all I mean, for I can't call to mind what your name was, over the water."

"No?"

"No. But I'll swear it was a name of two syllables."

"Indeed?"

"Yes. T'other one's was one syllable. I know you. You was a spy-witness at the Bailey. What in the name of the Father of Lies, own father to yourself, was you called at that time?"

"Barsad," said another voice, striking in.

"That's the name for a thousand pound!" cried Jerry.

The speaker who struck in, was Sydney Carton. He had his hands behind him under the skirts of his riding-coat, and he stood at Mr. Cruncher's elbow as negligently as he might have stood at the Old Bailey itself.

"Don't be alarmed, my dear Miss Pross. I arrived at Mr. Lorry's, to his surprise, yesterday evening; we agreed that I would not present myself elsewhere until

all was well, or unless I could be useful ; I present myself here, to beg a little talk with your brother. I wish you had a better employed brother than Mr. Barsad. I wish for your sake Mr. Barsad was not a Sheep of the Prisons."

Sheep was a cant word of the time for a spy, under the gaolers. The spy, who was pale, turned paler, and asked him how he dared—

"I'll tell you," said Sydney. "I lighted on you, Mr. Barsad, coming out of the prison of the Conciergerie while I was contemplating the walls, an hour or more ago. You have a face to be remembered, and I remember faces well. Made curious by seeing you in that connexion, and having a reason, to which you are no stranger, for associating you with the misfortunes of a friend now very unfortunate, I walked in your direction. I walked into the wine-shop here, close after you, and sat near you. I had no difficulty in deducing from your unreserved conversation, and the rumour openly going about among your admirers, the nature of your calling. And gradually, what I had done at random, seemed to shape itself into a purpose, Mr. Barsad."

"What purpose?" the spy asked.

"It would be troublesome, and might be dangerous, to explain in the street. Could you favour me, in confidence, with some minutes of your company—at the office of Tellson's Bank, for instance?"

"Under a threat?"

"Oh! Did I say that!"

"Then why should I go there?"

"Really, Mr. Barsad, I can't say, if you can't."

"Do you mean that you won't say, sir?" the spy irresolutely asked.

"You apprehend me very clearly, Mr. Barsad. I won't."

Carton's negligent recklessness of manner came powerfully in aid of his quickness and skill, in such a business as he had in his secret mind, and with such a man as he had to do with. His practised eye saw it, and made the most of it.

"Now, I told you so," said the spy, casting a reproachful look at his sister; "if any trouble comes of this, it's your doing."

"Come, come, Mr. Barsad!" exclaimed Sydney. "Don't be ungrateful. But for my great respect for your sister, I might not have led up so pleasantly to a little proposal that I wish to make for our mutual satisfaction. Do you go with me to the Bank?"

"I'll hear what you have got to say. Yes, I'll go with you."

"I propose that we first conduct your sister safely to

the corner of her own street. Let me take your arm, Miss Pross. This is not a good city, at this time, for you to be out in, unprotected; and as your escort knows Mr. Barsad, I will invite him to Mr. Lorry's with us. Are we ready? Come then!"

Miss Pross recalled soon afterwards, and to the end of her life remembered, that as she pressed her hands on Sydney's arm and looked up in his face, imploring him to do no hurt to Solomon, there was a braced purpose in the arm and a kind of inspiration in the eyes, which not only contradicted his light manner, but changed and raised the man. She was too much occupied then, with fears for the brother who so little deserved her affection, and with Sydney's friendly reassurances, adequately to heed what she observed.

They left her at the corner of the street, and Carton led the way to Mr. Lorry's, which was within a few minutes' walk. John Barsad, or Solomon Pross, walked at his side.

Mr. Lorry had just finished his dinner, and was sitting before a cheery little log or two of fire—perhaps looking into their blaze for the picture of that younger elderly gentleman from Tellson's, who had looked into the red coals at the Royal George at Dover, now a good many years ago. He turned his head as they entered, and showed the surprise with which he saw a stranger.

"Miss Pross's brother, sir," said Sydney. "Mr. Barsad."

"Barsad?" repeated the old gentleman, "Barsad? I have an association with the name—and with the face."

"I told you you had a remarkable face, Mr. Barsad," observed Carton, coolly. "Pray sit down."

As he took a chair himself he supplied the link that Mr. Lorry wanted, by saying to him with a frown, "Witness at that trial." Mr. Lorry immediately remembered, and regarded his new visitor with an undisguised look of abhorrence.

"Mr. Barsad has been recognised by Miss Pross as the affectionate brother you have heard of," said Sydney, "and has acknowledged the relationship. I pass to worse news. Darnay has been arrested again."

Struck with consternation, the old gentleman exclaimed, "What do you tell me! I left him safe and free within these two hours, and am about to return to him!"

"Arrested for all that. When was it done, Mr. Barsad?"

"Just now, if at all."

"Mr. Barsad is the best authority possible, sir," said Sydney, "and I have it from Mr. Barsad's communication to a friend and brother Sheep over a bottle of wine,

that the arrest has taken place. He left the messengers at the gate, and saw them admitted by the porter. There is no earthly doubt that he is retaken."

Mr. Lorry's business eye read in the speaker's face that it was loss of time to dwell upon the point. Confused, but sensible that something might depend on his presence of mind, he commanded himself, and was silently attentive.

"Now, I trust," said Sydney to him, "that the name and influence of Doctor Manette may stand him in as good stead to-morrow—you said he would be before the Tribunal again to-morrow, Mr. Barsad?"

"Yes; I believe so."

"—In as good stead to-morrow as to-day. But it may not be so. I own to you, I am shaken, Mr. Lorry, by Doctor Manette's not having had the power to prevent this arrest."

"He may not have known of it beforehand," said Mr. Lorry.

"But that very circumstance would be alarming, when we remember how identified he is with his son-in-law."

"That's true," Mr. Lorry acknowledged, with his troubled hand at his chin, and his troubled eyes on Carton.

"In short," said Sydney, "this is a desperate time, when desperate games are played for desperate stakes. Let the Doctor play the winning game; I will play the losing one. No man's life here is worth purchase. Any one carried home by the people to-day, may be condemned to-morrow. Now, the stake I have resolved to play for, in case of the worst, is a friend in the Conciergerie. And the friend I purpose to myself to win, is Mr. Barsad."

"You need have good cards, sir," said the spy.

"I'll run them over. I'll see what I hold.—Mr. Lorry, you know what a brute I am; I wish you'd give me a little brandy."

It was put before him, and he drank off a glassful—drank off another glassful—pushed the bottle thoughtfully away.

"Mr. Barsad," he went on, in the tone of one who really was looking over a hand at cards: "Sheep of the prisons, emissary of Republican Committees, now turnkey, now prisoner, always spy and secret informer, so much the more valuable here for being English than an Englishman is less open to suspicion of subornation in those characters than a Frenchman, represents himself to his employers under a false name. That's a very good card. Mr. Barsad, now in the employ of the republican French government, was formerly in the employ of the aristocratic English government, the enemy

of France and freedom. That's an excellent card. Inference clear as day in this region of suspicion, that Mr. Barsad, still in the pay of the aristocratic English government, is the spy of Pitt, the treacherous foe of the Republic crouching in its bosom, the English traitor and agent of all mischief so much spoken of and so difficult to find. That's a card not to be beaten. Have you followed my hand, Mr. Barsad?"

"Not to understand your play," returned the spy, somewhat uneasily.

"I play my Ace, Denunciation of Mr. Barsad to the nearest Section Committee. Look over your hand, Mr. Barsad, and see what you have. Don't hurry."

He drew the bottle near, poured out another glassful of brandy, and drank it off. He saw that the spy was fearful of his drinking himself into a fit state for the immediate denunciation of him. Seeing it, he poured out and drank another glassful.

"Look over your hand carefully, Mr. Barsad. Take time."

It was a poorer hand than he suspected. Mr. Barsad saw losing cards in it that Sydney Carton knew nothing of. Thrown out of his honourable employment in England, through too much unsuccessful hard swearing there—no blame because he was not wanted there; our English reasons for vaunting our superiority to secrecy and spies are of very modern date—he knew that he had crossed the Channel, and accepted service in France: first, as a tempter and an eavesdropper among his own countrymen there: gradually, as a tempter and an eavesdropper among the natives. He knew that under the overthrown government he had been a spy upon Saint Antoine and Defarge's wine-shop; had received from the watchful police such heads of information concerning Doctor Manette's imprisonment, release, and history, as should serve him for an introduction to familiar conversation with the Defarges; and tried them on Madame Defarge, and had broken down with them signally. He always remembered with fear and trembling, that that terrible woman had knitted when he talked with her, and had looked ominously at him as her fingers moved. He had since seen her, in the Section of Saint Antoine, over and over again produce her knitted registers, and denounce people whose lives the guillotine then surely swallowed up. He knew, as every one employed as he was, did, that he was never safe; that flight was impossible; that he was tied fast under the shadow of the axe; and that in spite of his utmost tergiversation and treachery in furtherance of the reigning terror, a word might bring it down upon him. Once denounced, and on such grave grounds as had just now been suggested to his mind, he

foresaw that the dreadful woman of whose unrelenting character he had seen many proofs, would produce against him that fatal register, and would quash his last chance of life. Besides that all secret men are men soon terrified, here were surely cards enough of one black suit, to justify the holder in growing rather livid as he turned them over.

"You scarcely seem to like your hand," said Sydney, with the greatest composure. "Do you play?"

"I think, sir," said the spy, in the meanest manner, as he turned to Mr. Lorry, "I may appeal to a gentleman of your years and benevolence, to put it to this other gentleman, so much your junior, whether he can under any circumstances reconcile it to his station to play that Ace of which he has spoken. I admit that I am a spy, and that it is considered a discreditable station—though it must be filled by somebody; but this gentleman is no spy, and why should he so demean himself as to make himself one?"

"I play my Ace, Mr. Barsad," said Carton, taking the answer on himself, and looking at his watch, "without any scruple, in a very few minutes."

"I should have hoped, gentlemen both," said the spy, always striving to hook Mr. Lorry into the discussion, "that your respect for my sister—"

"I could not better testify my respect for your sister than by finally relieving her of her brother," said Sydney Carton.

"You think not, sir?"

"I have thoroughly made up my mind about it."

The smooth manner of the spy, curiously in dissonance with his ostentatiously rough dress, and probably with his usual demeanour, received such a check from the inscrutability of Carton,—who was a mystery to wiser and honester men than he—that it faltered here and failed him. While he was at a loss, Carton said, resuming his former air of contemplating cards:

"And indeed, now I think again, I have a strong impression that I have another good card here, not yet enumerated. That friend and fellow-Sheep, who spoke of himself as pasturing in the country prisons; who was he?"

"French. You don't know him," said the spy, quickly.

"French, eh?" repeated Carton, musing, and not appearing to notice him at all, though he echoed his word.

"Well; he may be."

"Is, I assure you," said the spy; "though it's not important."

"Though it's not important," repeated Carton, in the same mechanical way—"though it's not important

—No, it's not important. No. Yet I know the face."

"I think not. I am sure not. It can't be," said the spy.

"It—can't—be," muttered Sydney Carton, retrospectively, and filling his glass (which fortunately was a small one) again. "Can't—be. Spoke good French. Yet like a foreigner, I thought?"

"Provincial," said the spy.

"No. Foreign!" cried Carton, striking his open hand on the table as a light broke clearly on his mind. "Cly! Disguised, but the same man. We had that man before us at the Old Bailey."

"Now, there you are hasty, sir," said Barsad, with a smile that gave his aquiline nose an extra inclination to one side; "there you really give me an advantage over you. Cly (who I will unreservedly admit, at this distance of time, was a partner of mine) has been dead several years. I attended him in his last illness. He was buried in London, at the church of Saint Pancras-in-the-Fields. His unpopularity with the blackguard multitude at the moment, prevented my following his remains, but I helped to lay him in his coffin."

Here, Mr. Lorry became aware, from where he sat, of a most remarkable goblin shadow on the wall. Tracing it to its source, he discovered it to be caused by a sudden extraordinary rising and stiffening of all the risen and stiff hair on Mr. Cruncher's head.

"Let us be reasonable," said the spy, "and let us be fair. To show you how mistaken you are, and what an unfounded assumption yours is, I will lay before you a certificate of Cly's burial, which I happen to have carried in my pocket-book," with a hurried hand he produced and opened it, "ever since. There it is. Oh, look at it, look at it! You may take it in your hand; it's no forgery."

Here, Mr. Lorry perceived the reflection on the wall to elongate, and Mr. Cruncher rose and stepped forward. His hair could not have been more violently on end, if it had been that moment dressed by the Cow with the crumpled horn in the house that Jack built.

Unseen by the spy, Mr. Cruncher stood at his side, and touched him on the shoulder like a ghostly bailiff.

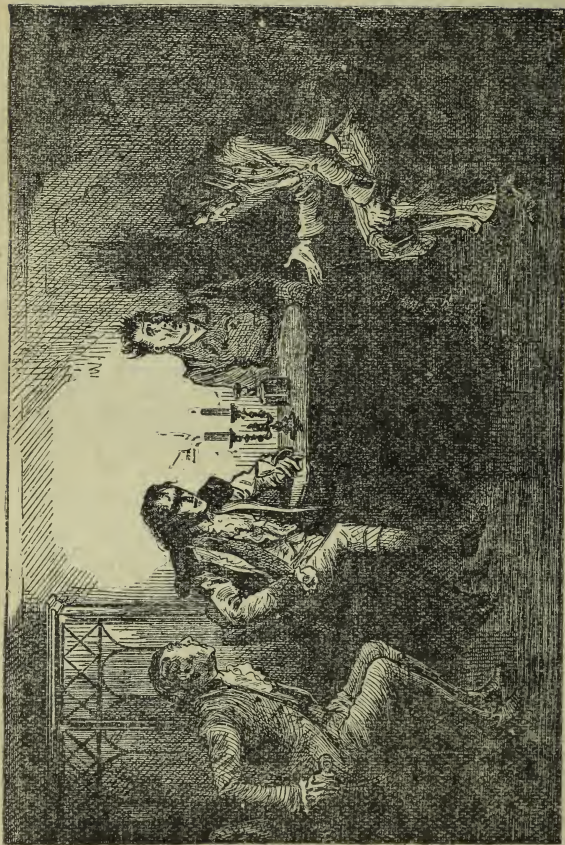
"That there Roger Cly, master," said Mr. Cruncher, with a taciturn and iron-bound visage. "So *you* put him in his coffin?"

"I did."

"Who took him out of it?"

Barsad leaned back in his chair, and stammered, "What do you mean?"

"I mean," said Mr. Cruncher, "that he warn't never



HERE MR. LORRY BECAME AWARE OF A MOST REMARKABLE GOBLIN SHADOW ON THE WALL.
—A Tale of Two Cities, Vol. Eleven, page 268.

in it. No! Not he! I'll have my head took off, if he was ever in it."

The spy looked round at the two gentlemen; they both looked in unspeakable astonishment at Jerry.

"I tell you," said Jerry, "that you buried paving-stones and earth in that there coffin. Don't go and tell *me* that you buried Cly. It was a take in. Me and two more knows it."

"How do you know it?"

"What's that to you? Ecod!" growled Mr. Cruncher, "it's you I have got a old grudge again, is it, with your shameful impositions upon tradesmen! I'd catch hold of your throat and choke you for half a guinea."

Sydney Carton, who, with Mr. Lorry, had been lost in amazement at this turn of the business, here requested Mr. Cruncher to moderate and explain himself.

"At another time, sir," he returned, evasively, "the present time is ill-convenient for explainin'. What I stand to, is, that he knows well wot that there Cly was never in that there coffin. Let him say he was, in so much as a word of one syllable, and I'll either catch hold of his throat and choke him for half a guinea;" Mr. Cruncher dwelt upon this as quite a liberal offer; "or I'll out and announce him."

"Humph! I see one thing," said Carton. "I hold another card, Mr. Barsad. Impossible, here in raging Paris, with Suspicion filling the air, for you to outlive denunciation, when you are in communication with another aristocratic spy of the same antecedents as yourself, who, moreover, has the mystery about him of having feigned death and come to life again! A plot in the prisons, of the foreigner against the Republic. A strong card—a certain Guillotine card! Do you play?"

"No!" returned the spy. "I throw up. I confess that we were so unpopular with the outrageous mob, that I only got away from England at the risk of being ducked to death, and that Cly was so ferreted up and down, that he never would have got away at all but for that sham. Though how this man knows it was a sham, is a wonder of wonders to me."

"Never you trouble your head about this man," retorted the contentious Mr. Cruncher; "you'll have trouble enough with giving your attention to that gentleman. And look here! Once more!"—Mr. Cruncher could not be restrained from making rather an ostentatious parade of his liberality—"I'd catch hold of your throat and choke you for half a guinea."

The Sheep of the prisons turned from him to Sydney

Carton, and said, with more decision, "It has come to a point. I go on duty soon, and can't overstay my time. You told me you had a proposal; what is it? Now, it is of no use asking too much of me. Ask me to do anything in my office, putting my head in great extra danger, and I had better trust my life to the chances of a refusal than the chances of consent. In short, I should make that choice. You talk of desperation. We are all desperate here. Remember! I may denounce you if I think proper, and I can swear my way through stone walls, and so can others. Now, what do you want with me?"

"Not very much. You are a turnkey at the Conciergerie?"

"I tell you once for all, there is no such thing as an escape possible," said the Spy, firmly.

"Why need you tell what I have not asked? You are a turnkey at the Conciergerie?"

"I am sometimes."

"You can be when you choose?"

"I can pass in and out when I choose."

Sydney Carton filled another glass with brandy, poured it slowly out upon the hearth, and watched it as it dropped. It being all spent, he said, rising:

"So far, we have spoken before these two, because it was as well that the merits of the cards should not rest solely between you and me. Come into the dark room here, and let us have one final word alone."

CHAPTER IX.

The Game Made.

WHILE Sydney Carton and the Sheep of the prisons were in the adjoining dark room, speaking so low that not a sound was heard, Mr. Lorry looked at Jerry in considerable doubt and mistrust. That honest tradesman's manner of receiving the look, did not inspire confidence; he changed the leg on which he rested, as often as if he had fifty of those limbs, and were trying them all; he examined his finger-nails with a very questionable closeness of attention; and whenever Mr. Lorry's eye caught his, he was taken with that peculiar kind of short cough requiring the hollow of a hand before it, which is seldom, if ever, known to be an infirmity attendant on perfect openness of character.

"Jerry," said Mr. Lorry. "Come here."

Mr. Cruncher came forward sideways, with one of his shoulders in advance of him.

"What have you been, besides a messenger?"

After some cogitation, accompanied with an intent look at his patron, Mr. Cruncher conceived the luminous idea of replying, "Agricultooral character."

"My mind misgives me much," said Mr. Lorry, angrily shaking a forefinger at him, "that you have used the respectable and great house of Tellson's as a blind, and that you have had an unlawful occupation of an infamous description. If you have, don't expect me to befriend you when you get back to England. If you have, don't expect me to keep your secret. Tellson's shall not be imposed upon."

"I hope, sir," pleaded the abashed Mr. Cruncher, "that a gentleman like yourself wot I've had the honour of odd jobbing till I'm grey at it, would think twice about harming of me, even if it wos so—I don't say it is, but even if it wos. And which it is to be took into account that if it wos, it wouldn't, even then, be all o' one side. There'd be two sides to it. There might be medical doctors at the present hour, a picking up their guineas where a honest tradesman don't pick up his fardens—fardens! no, nor yet his half fardens—half fardens! no, nor yet his quarter—a banking away like smoke at Tellson's, and a cocking their medical eyes at that tradesman on the sly, a going in and going out to their own carriages—ah! equally like smoke, if not more so. Well, that 'ud be imposing too, on Tellson's. For you cannot sarse the goose and not the gander. And here's Mrs. Cruncher, or leastways wos in the Old England times, and would be to-morrow, if cause given, a floppin' again the business to that degree as is ruining—stark ruining! Whereas them medical doctors' wives don't flop—catch 'em at it! Or, if they flop, their floppings goes in favour of more patients, and how can you rightly have one without the t'other? Then, wot with undertakers, and wot with parish clerks, and wot with sextons, and wot with private watchmen (all awaricious and all in it), a man wouldn't get much by it, even if it wos so. And wot little a man did get, would never prosper with him, Mr. Lorry. He'd never have no good of it; he'd want all along to be out of the line, if he could see his way out, being once in—even if it wos so."

"Ugh!" cried Mr. Lorry, rather relenting, nevertheless. "I am shocked at the sight of you."

"Now, what I would humbly offer to you, sir," pursued Mr. Cruncher, "even if it wos so, which I don't say it is—"

"Don't prevaricate," said Mr. Lorry.

"No, I will *not*, sir," returned Mr. Cruncher, as if nothing were further from his thoughts or practice—"which I don't say it is—wot I would humbly offer to you, sir, would be this. Upon that there stool, at that there

Bar, sets that there boy of mine, brought up and growed up to be a man, wot will errand you, message you, general-light-job you, till your heels is where your head is, if such should be your wishes. If it wos so, which I still don't say it is (for I will not prewaricate to you, sir), let that there boy keep his father's place, and take care of his mother; don't blow upon that boy's father—do not do it, sir—and let that father go into the line of the reg'lar diggin', and make amends for what he would have un-dug—if it wos so—by diggin' of 'em in with a will, and with convictions respectin' the futur' keepin' of 'em safe. That, Mr. Lorry," said Mr. Cruncher, wiping his forehead with his arm, as an announcement that he had arrived at the peroration of his discourse, "is wot I would respectfully offer to you, sir. A man don't see all this here a goin' on dreadful round him in the way of Subjects without heads, dear me, plentiful enough fur to bring the price down to portorage and hardly that, without havin' his serious thoughts of things. And these here would be mine, if it wos so, entreatin' of you fur to bear in mind that wot I said just now, I up and said in the good cause when I might have kep' it back."

"That at least is true," said Mr. Lorry. "Say no more now. It may be that I shall yet stand your friend, if you deserve it, and repent in action—not in words. I want no more words."

Mr. Cruncher knuckled his forehead, as Sydney Carton and the spy returned from the dark room. "Adieu, Mr. Barsad!" said the former; "our arrangement thus made, you have nothing to fear from me."

He sat down in a chair on the hearth, over against Mr. Lorry. When they were alone, Mr. Lorry asked him what he had done?

"Not much. If it should go ill with the prisoner, I have ensured access to him, once."

Mr. Lorry's countenance fell.

"It is all I could do," said Carton. "To propose too much, would be to put this man's head under the axe, and, as he himself said, nothing worse could happen to him if he were denounced. It was obviously, the weakness of the position. There is no help for it."

"But access to him," said Mr. Lorry, "if it should go ill before the tribunal, will not save him."

"I never said it would."

Mr. Lorry's eyes gradually sought the fire; his sympathy with his darling, and the heavy disappointment of this second arrest, gradually weakened them; he was an old man now, overborne with anxiety of late, and his tears fell.

"You are a good man and a true friend," said Carton, in an altered voice. "Forgive me if I notice that you

are affected. I could not see my father weep, and sit by, careless. And I could not respect your sorrow more, if you were my father. You are free from that misfortune, however."

Though he said the last words, with a slip into his usual manner, there was a true feeling and respect both in his tone and in his touch, that Mr. Lorry, who had never seen the better side of him, was wholly unprepared for. He gave him his hand, and Carton gently pressed it.

"To return to poor Darnay," said Carton. "Don't tell Her of this interview, or this arrangement. It would not enable Her to go to see him. She might think it was contrived, in case of the worst, to convey to him the means of anticipating the sentence."

Mr. Lorry had not thought of that, and he looked quickly at Carton to see if it were in his mind. It seemed to be; he returned the look, and evidently understood it.

"She might think a thousand things," Carton said, "and any of them would only add to her trouble. Don't speak of me to her. As I said to you when I first came, I had better not see her. I can put my hand out, to do any little helpful work for her that my hand can find to do, without that. You are going to her, I hope? She must be very desolate to-night."

"I am going now, directly."

"I am glad of that. She has such a strong attachment to you and reliance on you. How does she look?"

"Anxious and unhappy, but very beautiful."

"Ah!"

It was a long, grieving sound, like a sigh—almost like a sob. It attracted Mr. Lorry's eyes to Carton's face, which was turned to the fire. A light, or a shade (the old gentleman could not have said which), passed from it as swiftly as a change will sweep over a hill-side on a wild bright day, and he lifted his foot to put back one of the little flaming logs, which was tumbling forward. He wore the white riding-coat and top-boots, then in vogue, and the light of the fire touching their light surfaces made him look very pale, with his long brown hair, all untrimmed, hanging loose about him. His indifference to fire was sufficiently remarkable to elicit a word of remonstrance from Mr. Lorry; his boot was still upon the hot embers of the flaming log, when it had broken under the weight of his foot.

"I forgot it," he said.

Mr. Lorry's eyes were again attracted to his face. Taking note of the wasted air which clouded the naturally handsome features, and having the expression of

prisoners' faces fresh in his mind, he was strongly reminded of that expression.

"And your duties here have drawn to an end, sir?" said Carton, turning to him.

"Yes. As I was telling you last night when Lucie came in so unexpectedly, I have at length done all that I can do here. I hoped to have left them in perfect safety, and then to have quitted Paris. I have my Leave to Pass. I was ready to go."

They were both silent.

"Yours is a long life to look back upon, sir?" said Carton, wistfully.

"I am in my seventy-eighth year."

"You have been useful all your life; steadily and constantly occupied; trusted, respected, and looked up to?"

"I have been a man of business, ever since I have been a man. Indeed, I may say that I was a man of business when a boy."

"See what a place you fill at seventy-eight. How many people will miss you when you leave it empty!"

"A solitary old bachelor," answered Mr. Lorry, shaking his head. "There is nobody to weep for me."

"How can you say that? Wouldn't she weep for you? Wouldn't her child?"

"Yes, yes, thank God. I didn't quite mean what I said."

"It is a thing to thank God for; is it not?"

"Surely, surely."

"If you could say, with truth, to your own solitary heart, to-night, 'I have secured to myself the love and attachment, the gratitude or respect, of no human creature; I have won myself a tender place in no regard; I have done nothing good or serviceable to be remembered by!' your seventy-eight years would be seventy-eight heavy curses; would they not?"

"You say truly, Mr. Carten; I think they would be."

Sydney turned his eyes again upon the fire, and, after a silence of a few moments, said:

"I should like to ask you:—Does your childhood seem far off? Do the days when you sat at your mother's knee, seem days of very long ago?"

Responding to his softened manner, Mr. Lorry answered:

"Twenty years back, yes; at this time of my life, no. For, as I draw closer and closer to the end, I travel in the circle, nearer and nearer to the beginning. It seems to be one of the kind smoothings and preparings of the way. My heart is touched now, by many remembrances that had long fallen asleep, of my pretty young mother (and I so old!), and by many associations of the days

when what we call the World was not so real with me, and my faults were not confirmed in me."

"I understand the feeling!" exclaimed Carton, with a bright flush. "And you are the better for it?"

"I hope so."

Carton terminated the conversation here, by rising to help him on with his outer coat; "but you," said Mr. Lorry, reverting to the theme, "you are young."

"Yes," said Carton. "I am not old, but my young way was never the way to age. Enough of me."

"And of me, I am sure," said Mr Lorry. "Are you going out?"

"I'll walk with you to her gate. You know my vagabond and restless habits. If I should prowl about the streets a long time, don't be uneasy; I shall reappear in the morning. You go to the Court to-morrow?"

"Yes, unhappily."

"I shall be there, but only as one of the crowd. My Spy will find a place for me. Take my arm, sir."

Mr. Lorry did so, and they went down-stairs and out in the streets. A few minutes brought them to Mr. Lorry's destination. Carton left him there; but lingered at a little distance, and turned back to the gate again when it was shut, and touched it. He had heard of her going to the prison every day. "She came out here," he said, looking about him, "turned this way, must have trod on these stones often. Let me follow in her steps."

It was ten o'clock at night when he stood before the prison of La Force, where she had stood hundreds of times. A little wood-sawyer, having closed his shop, was smoking his pipe at his shop-door.

"Good night, citizen," said Sydney Carton, pausing in going by; for, the man eyed him inquisitively.

"Good night, citizen."

"How goes the Republic?"

"You mean the Guillotine. Not ill. Sixty-three to-day. We shall mount to a hundred soon. Sanson and his men complain sometimes, of being exhausted. Ha, ha, ha! He is so droll, that Sanson. Such a Barber!"

"Do you often go to see him—"

"Shave? Always. Every day. What a Barber! You have seen him at work?"

"Never."

"Go and see him when he has a good batch. Figure this to yourself, citizen; he shaved the sixty-three to-day, in less than two pipes! Less than two pipes! Word of honour!"

As the grinning little man held out the pipe he was smoking, to explain how he timed the executioner, Car-

ton was so sensible of a rising desire to strike the life out of him, that he turned away.

"But you are not English," said the wood-sawyer, "though you wear English dress?"

"Yes," said Carton, pausing again, and answering over his shoulder.

"You speak like a Frenchman."

"I am an old student here."

"Aha, a perfect Frenchman! Good night, Englishman."

"Good night, citizen."

"But go and see that droll dog," the little man persisted, calling after him. "And take a pipe with you!"

Sydney had not gone far out of sight, when he stopped in the middle of the street under a glimmering lamp, and wrote with his pencil on a scrap of paper. Then, traversing with the decided step of one who remembered the way well, several dark and dirty streets—much dirtier than usual, for the best public thoroughfares remained uncleansed in those times of terror—he stopped at a chemist's shop, which the owner was closing with his own hands. A small, dim, crooked shop, kept in a tortuous, up-hill thoroughfare, by a small, dim, crooked man.

Giving this citizen, too, good-night, as he confronted him at his counter, he laid the scrap of paper before him. "Whew!" the chemist whistled softly, as he read it. "Hi! hi! hi!"

Sydney Carton took no heed, and the chemist said:

"For you, citizen?"

"For me."

"You will be careful to keep them separate, citizen? You know the consequences of mixing them?"

"Perfectly."

Certain small packets were made and given to him. He put them, one by one, in the breast of his inner coat, counted out the money for them, and deliberately left the shop. "There is nothing more to do," said he, glancing upward at the moon, "until to-morrow. I can't sleep."

It was not a reckless manner, the manner in which he said these words aloud under the fast-sailing clouds, nor was it more expressive of negligence than defiance. It was the settled manner of a tired man, who had wandered and struggled and got lost, but who at length struck into his road and saw its end.

Long ago, when he had been famous among his earliest competitors as a youth of great promise, he had followed his father to the grave. His mother had died years before. These solemn words, which had been read at his father's grave, arose in his mind as he went down:

the dark streets, among the heavy shadows, with the moon and the clouds sailing on high above him. "I am the resurrection and the life, saith the Lord : he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live. and whosoever liveth and believeth in me, shall never die."

In a city dominated by the axe, alone at night, with natural sorrow rising in him for the sixty-three who had been that day put to death, and for to-morrow's victims then awaiting their doom in the prisons, and still of to-morrow's, and to-morrow's, the chain of association that brought the words home, like a rusty old ship's anchor from the deep, might have been easily found. He did not seek it, but repeated them and went on.

With a solemn interest in the lighted windows where the people were going to rest, forgetful through a few calm hours of the horrors surrounding them ; in the towers of the churches, where no prayers were said, for the popular revulsion had even travelled that length of self-destruction from years of priestly impostors, plunderers, and profligates ; in the distant burial-places, reserved, as they wrote upon the gates, for Eternal Sleep ; in the abounding gaols ; and in the streets along which the sixties rolled to a death which had become so common and material, that no sorrowful story of a haunting Spirit ever arose among the people out of all the working of the Guillotine ; with a solemn interest in the whole life and death of the city settling down to its short nightly pause in fury ; Sydney Carton crossed the Seine again for the lighter streets.

Few coaches were abroad, for riders in coaches were liable to be suspected, and gentility hid its head in red nightcaps, and put on heavy shoes, and trudged. But, the theatres were all well filled, and the people poured cheerfully out as he passed, and went chattering home. At one of the theatre doors, there was a little girl with a mother, looking for a way across the street through the mud. He carried the child over, and before the timid arm was loosened from his neck asked her for a kiss.

"I am the resurrection and the life, saith the Lord : he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live : and whosoever liveth and believeth in me, shall never die."

Now, that the streets were quiet, and the night wore on, the words were in the echoes of his feet, and were in the air. Perfectly calm and steady, he sometimes repeated them to himself as he walked ; but, he heard them always.

The night wore out, and, as he stood upon the bridge listening to the water as it splashed the river-walls o

the Island of Paris, where the picturesque confusion of houses and cathedral shone bright in the light of the moon, the day came coldly, looking like a dead face out of the sky. Then, the night, with the moon and the stars, turned pale and died, and for a little while it seemed as if Creation were delivered over to Death's dominion.

But, the glorious sun, rising, seemed to strike those words, that burden of the night, straight and warm to his heart in its long bright rays. And looking along them, with reverently shaded eyes, a bridge of light appeared to span the air between him and the sun, while the river sparkled under it.

The strong tide, so swift, so deep, and certain, was like a congenial friend, in the morning stillness. He walked by the stream, far from the houses, and in the light and warmth of the sun fell asleep on the bank. When he awoke and was afoot again, he lingered there yet a little longer, watching an eddy that turned and turned purposeless, until the stream absorbed it, and carried it on to the sea.—“Like me!”

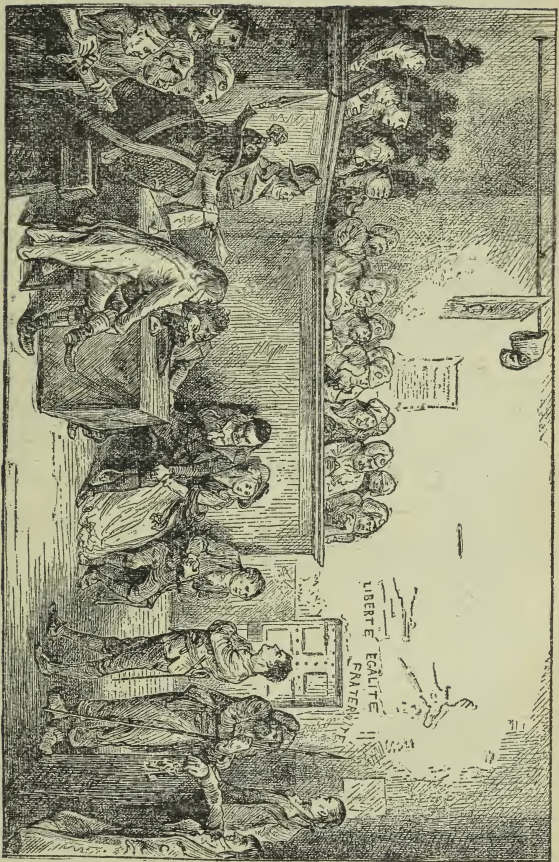
A trading-boat, with a sail of the softened colour of a dead leaf, then glided into his view, floated by him, and died away. As its silent track in the water disappeared, the prayer that had broken up out of his heart for a merciful consideration of all his poor blindnesses and errors, ended in the words, “I am the resurrection and the life.”

Mr. Lorry was already out when he got back, and it was easy to surmise where the good old man was gone. Sydney Carton drank nothing but a little coffee, ate some bread, and, having washed and changed to refresh himself, went out to the place of trial.

The court was all astir and a-buzz, when the black sheep—whom many fell away from in dread—pressed him into an obscure corner among the crowd. Mr. Lorry was there, and Doctor Manette was there. She was there, sitting beside her father.

When her husband was brought in, she turned a look upon him, so sustaining, so encouraging, so full of admiring love and pitying tenderness, yet so courageous for his sake, that it called the healthy blood into his face, brightened his glance, and animated his heart. If there had been any eyes to notice the influence of her look, on Sydney Carton, it would have been seen to be the same influence exactly.

Before that unjust Tribunal, there was little or no order of procedure, ensuring to any accused person any reasonable hearing. There could have been no such Revolution, if all laws and forms, and ceremonies, had not first been so monstrously abused, that the suicidal



THE TRIAL OF EYREMONDE.

—A Tale of Two Cities, Vol. Eleven, page 279.

vengeance of the Revolution was to scatter them all to the winds.

Every eye was turned to the jury. The same determined patriots and good republicans as yesterday and the day before, and to-morrow and the day after. Eager and prominent among them, one man with a craving face, and his fingers perpetually hovering about his lips, whose appearance gave great satisfaction to the spectators. A life-thirsting, cannibal-looking, bloody-minded jurymen, the Jacques Three of Saint Antoine. The whole jury, as a jury of dogs empannelled to try the deer.

Every eye then turned to the five judges and the public prosecutor. No favourable leaning in that quarter to-day. A fell, uncompromising, murderous business-meaning there. Every eye then sought some other eye in the crowd, and gleamed at it approvingly; and heads nodded at one another, before bending forward with a strained attention.

Charles Evrémonde, called Darnay. Released yesterday. Re-accused and re-taken yesterday. Indictment delivered to him last night. Suspected and Denounced enemy of the Republic, Aristocrat, one of a family of tyrants, one of a race proscribed, for that they had used their abolished privileges to the infamous oppression of the people. Charles Evrémonde, called Darnay, in right of such proscription, absolutely Dead in Law.

To this effect, in as few or fewer words, the Public Prosecutor.

The President asked, was the Accused openly denounced or secretly?

"Openly, President."

"By whom?"

"Three voices. Ernest Defarge, wine-vender of Saint Antoine."

"Good."

"Thérèse Defarge, his wife."

"Good."

"Alexandre Manette, physician."

A great uproar took place in the court, and in the midst of it, Doctor Manette was seen, pale and trembling, standing where he had been seated.

"President, I indignantly protest to you that this is a forgery and a fraud. You know the accused to be the husband of my daughter. My daughter, and those dear to her, are far dearer to me than my life. Who and where is the false conspirator who says that I denounce the husband of my child?"

"Citizen Manette, be tranquil. To fail in submission to the authority of the Tribunal would be to put your-

self out of Law. As to what is dearer to you than life, nothing can be so dear to a good citizen as the Republic."

Loud acclamations hailed this rebuke. The President rang his bell, and with warmth resumed.

"If the Republic should demand of you the sacrifice of your child herself, you would have no duty but to sacrifice her. Listen to what is to follow. In the meanwhile, be silent!"

Frantic acclamations were again raised. Doctor Manette sat down, with his eyes looking around, and his lips trembling; his daughter drew closer to him. The craving man on the jury rubbed his hands together, and restored the usual hand to his mouth.

Defarge was produced, when the court was quiet enough to admit of his being heard, and rapidly expounded the story of the imprisonment, and of his having been a mere boy in the doctor's service, and of the release, and of the state of the prisoner when released and delivered to him. This short examination followed, for the court was quick with its work.

"You did good service at the taking of the Bastille, citizen?"

"I believe so."

Here, an excited woman screeched from the crowd: "You were one of the best patriots there. Why not say so? You were a cannonier that day there, and you were among the first to enter the accursed fortress when it fell. Patriots, I speak the truth!"

It was The Vengeance who, amidst the warm commendations of the audience, thus assisted the proceedings. The President rang his bell; but, The Vengeance, warming with encouragement, shrieked, "I defy that bell!" wherein she was likewise much commended.

"Inform the Tribunal of what you did that day within the Bastille, citizen."

"I knew," said Defarge, looking down at his wife, who stood at the bottom of the steps on which he was raised, looking steadily up at him; "I knew that this prisoner, of whom I speak, had been confined in a cell known as One Hundred and Five, North Tower. I knew it from himself. He knew himself by no other name than One Hundred and Five, North Tower, when he made shoes under my care. As I serve my gun that day, I resolve when the place shall fall, to examine that cell. It falls. I mount to the cell, with a fellow-citizen who is one of the Jury, directed by a gaoler. I examine it, very closely. In a hole in the chimney, where a stone had been worked out and replaced, I find a written paper. This is that written paper. I have made it my business to examine some specimens of the writing of Doctor Manette. This

is the writing of Doctor Manette. I confide this paper, in the writing of Doctor Manette, to the hands of the President."

"Let it be read."

In a dead silence and stillness—the prisoner under trial looking lovingly at his wife, his wife only looking from him to look with solicitude at her father, Doctor Manette keeping his eyes fixed on the reader, Madame Defarge never taking hers from the prisoner, Defarge never taking his from his feasting wife, and all the other eyes there intent upon the Doctor, who saw none of them—the paper was read, as follows.

CHAPTER X.

The Substance of the Shadow.

"I, ALEXANDRE MANETTE, unfortunate physician, native of Beauvais and afterwards resident in Paris, write this melancholy paper in my doleful cell in the Bastille, during the last month of the year 1767. I write it at stolen intervals, under every difficulty. I design to secrete it in the wall of the chimney, where I have slowly and laboriously made a place of concealment for it. Some pitying hand may find it there, when I and my sorrows are dust.

"These words are formed by the rusty iron point with which I write with difficulty in scrapings of soot and charcoal from the chimney, mixed with blood, in the last month of the tenth year of my captivity. Hope has quite departed from my breast. I know from terrible warnings I have noted in myself that my reason will not long remain unimpaired, but I solemnly declare that I am at this time in the possession of my right mind—that my memory is exact and circumstantial—and that I write the truth as I shall answer for these my last recorded words, whether they be ever read by men or not, at the Eternal Judgment-seat.

"One cloudy moonlight night, in the third week of December (I think the twenty-second of the month), in the year 1757, I was walking on a retired part of the quay by the Seine for the refreshment of the frosty air, at an hour's distance from my place of residence in the Street of the School of Medicine, when a carriage came along behind me, driven very fast. As I stood aside to let that carriage pass, apprehensive that it might otherwise run me down, a head was put out at the window, and a voice called to the driver to stop.

"The carriage stopped as soon as the driver could rein

in his horses, and the same voice called to me by my name. I answered. The carriage was then so far in advance of me that two gentlemen had time to open the door and alight before I came up with it. I observed that they were both wrapped in cloaks, and appeared to conceal themselves. As they stood side by side near the carriage door, I also observed that they both looked of about my own age, or rather younger, and that they were greatly alike, in stature, manner, voice, and (as far as I could see) face too.

“‘You are Doctor Manette?’ said one.

“‘I am.’

“‘Doctor Manette, formerly of Beauvais,’ said the other; ‘the young physician, originally an expert surgeon, who within the last year or two, has made a rising reputation in Paris?’

“‘Gentlemen,’ I returned, ‘I am that Doctor Manette of whom you speak so graciously.’

“‘We have been to your residence,’ said the first, ‘and not being so fortunate as to find you there, and being informed that you were probably walking in this direction, we followed, in the hope of overtaking you. Will you please to enter the carriage?’

“The manner of both was imperious, and they both moved, as these words were spoken, so as to place me between themselves and the carriage door. They were armed. I was not.

“‘Gentlemen,’ said I, ‘pardon me; but I usually inquire who does me the honour to seek my assistance, and what is the nature of the case to which I am summoned.’

“The reply to this, was made by him who had spoken second. ‘Doctor, your clients are people of condition. As to the nature of the case, our confidence in your skill assures us that you will ascertain it for yourself better than we can describe it. Enough. Will you please to enter the carriage?’

“I could do nothing but comply, and I entered it in silence. They both entered after me—the last springing in, after putting up the steps. The carriage turned about, and drove on at its former speed.

“I repeat this conversation exactly as it occurred. I have no doubt that it is, word for word, the same. I describe everything exactly as it took place, constraining my mind not to wander from the task. Where I make the broken marks that follow here, I leave off for the time, and put my paper in its hiding-place. * * * * *

“The carriage left the streets behind, passed the North Barrier, and emerged upon the country road. At two-thirds of a league from the Barrier—I did not estimate the distance at that time, but afterwards when I traversed it—it struck out of the main avenue, and presently stopped

at a solitary house. We all three alighted, and walked, by a damp soft footpath in a garden where a neglected fountain had overflowed, to the door of the house. It was not opened immediately, in answer to the ringing of the bell, and one of my two conductors struck the man who opened it, with his heavy riding-glove, across the face.

“There was nothing in this action to attract my particular attention, for I had seen common people struck more commonly than dogs. But, the other of the two, being angry likewise, struck the man in like manner with his arm; the look and bearing of the brothers were then so exactly alike, that I then first perceived them to be twin brothers.

“From the time of our alighting at the outer gate (which we found locked, and which one of the brothers had opened to admit us, and had re-locked), I had heard cries proceeding from an upper chamber. I was conducted to this chamber straight, the cries growing louder as we ascended the stairs, and I found a patient in a high fever of the brain, lying upon a bed.

“The patient was a woman of great beauty, and young; assuredly not much past twenty. Her hair was torn and ragged, and her arms were bound to her sides with sashes and handkerchiefs. I noticed that these bonds were all portions of a gentleman’s dress. On one of them, which was a fringed scarf for a dress of cere-mony, I saw the armorial bearing of a Noble, and the letter E.

“I saw this, within the first minute of my contemplation of the patient; for, in her restless strivings she had turned over on her face on the edge of the bed, had drawn the end of the scarf into her mouth, and was in danger of suffocation. My first act was to put out my hand to relieve her breathing; and in moving the scarf aside, the embroidery in the corner caught my sight.

“I turned her gently over, placed my hands upon her breast to calm her and keep her down, and looked into her face. Her eyes were dilated and wild, and she constantly uttered piercing shrieks, and repeated the words, ‘My husband, my father, and my brother!’ and then counted up to twelve, and said, ‘Hush!’ For an instant, and no more, she would pause to listen, and then the piercing shrieks would begin again, and she would repeat the cry, ‘My husband, my father, and my brother!’ and would count up to twelve, and say ‘Hush!’ There was no variation in the order, or the manner. There was no cessation, but the regular moment’s pause, in the utterance of these sounds.

“‘How long,’ I asked, ‘has this lasted?’

“To distinguish the brothers, I will call them the

elder and the younger ; by the elder, I mean him who exercised the most authority. It was the elder who replied, ' Since about this hour last night.'

" ' She has a husband, a father, and a brother ?'

" ' A brother.'

" ' I do not address her brother ?'

" He answered with great contempt, ' No.'

" ' She has some recent association with the number twelve ?'

" The younger brother impatiently rejoined, ' With twelve o'clock ?'

" ' See, gentlemen,' said I, still keeping my hands upon her breast, ' how useless I am as you have brought me ! If I had known what I was coming to see, I could have come provided. As it is, time must be lost. There are no medicines to be obtained in this lonely place.'

" The elder brother looked at the younger, who said haughtily, ' There is a case of medicines here ;' and brought it from a closet, and put it on the table. * * * * *

" I opened some of the bottles, smelt them, and put the stoppers to my lips. If I had wanted to use anything save narcotic medicines that were poisons in themselves, I would not have administered any of those.

" ' Do you doubt them ?' asked the younger brother.

" ' You see, monsieur, I am going to use them,' I replied, and said no more.

" I made the patient swallow, with great difficulty, and after many efforts, the dose that I desired to give. As I intended to repeat it after a while, and as it was necessary to watch its influence, I then sat down by the side of the bed. There was a timid and suppressed woman in attendance (wife of the man down-stairs), who had retreated into a corner. The house was damp and decayed, indifferently furnished—evidently, recently occupied and temporarily used. Some thick old hangings had been nailed up before the windows, to deaden the sound of the shrieks. They continued to be uttered in their regular succession, with the cry, ' My husband, my father, my brother !' the counting up to twelve, and ' Hush !' The frenzy was so violent, that I had not unfastened the bandages restraining the arms ; but, I had looked to them, to see that they were not painful. The only spark of encouragement in the case, was, that my hand upon the sufferer's breast had this much soothing influence, that for minutes at a time it tranquillised the figure. It had no effect upon the cries ; no pendulum could be more regular.

" For the reason that my hand had this effect (I assume), I sat by the side of the bed for a half an hour, with the two brothers looking on, before the elder said :

" ' There is another patient.'

“I was startled, and asked, ‘Is it a pressing case?’

“‘You had better see, he carelessly answered; and took up a light. * * * * *

“The other patient lay in a back room across a second staircase, which was species of loft over a stable. There was a low plastered ceiling to a part of it; the rest was open, to the ridge of the tiled roof, and there were beams across. Hay and straw were stored in that portion of the place, fagots for firing, and a heap of apples in sand. I had to pass through that part, to get at the other. My memory is circumstantial and unshaken. I try it with these details, and I see them all, in this my cell in the Bastille, near the close of the tenth year of my captivity, as I saw them all that night.

“On some hay on the ground, with a cushion thrown under his head, lay a handsome peasant boy—a boy of not more than seventeen at the most. He lay on his back, with his teeth set, his right hand clenched on his breast, and his glaring eyes looking straight upward. I could not see where his wound was, as I kneeled on one knee over him; but, I could see that he was dying of a wound from a sharp point.

“‘I am a doctor, my poor fellow,’ said I. ‘Let me examine it.’

“‘I do not want it examined,’ he answered; ‘let it be.’

“It was under his hand, and I soothed him to let me move his hand away. The wound was a sword-thrust, received from twenty to twenty-four hours before, but no skill could have saved him if it had been looked to without delay. He was then dying fast. As I turned my eyes to the elder brother, I saw him looking down at this handsome boy whose life was ebbing out, as if he were a wounded bird, or hare, or rabbit; not at all as if he were a fellow-creature.

“‘How has this been done, monsieur?’ said I.

“‘A crazed young common dog! A serf! Forced my brother to draw upon him, and has fallen by my brother’s sword—like a gentleman.’

“There was no touch of pity, sorrow, or kindred humanity, in this answer. The speaker seemed to acknowledge that it was inconvenient to have that different order of creature dying there, and that it would have been better if he had died in the usual obscure routine of his vermin kind. He was quite incapable of any compassionate feeling about the boy, or about his fate.

“The boy’s eyes had slowly moved to him as he had spoken, and they now slowly moved to me.

“‘Doctor, they are very proud, these Nobles; but we common dogs are proud too, sometimes. They plunder us, outrage us, beat us, kill us; but we have a little

pride left, sometimes. She—have you seen her, Doctor?’

“The shrieks and the cries were audible there, though subdued by the distance. He referred to them, as if she were lying in our presence.

“I said, ‘I have seen her.’

“‘She is my sister, Doctor. They have had their shameful rights, these Nobles, in the modesty and virtue of our sisters, many years, but we have had good girls among us. I know it, and have heard my father say so. She was a good girl. She was betrothed to a good young man, too: a tenant of his. We were all tenants of his—that man’s who stands there. The other is his brother, the worst of a bad race.’

“It was with the greatest difficulty that the boy gathered bodily force to speak; but, his spirit spoke with a dreadful emphasis.

“‘We were so robbed by that man who stands there, as all we common dogs are by those superior Beings—taxed by him without mercy, obliged to work for him without pay, obliged to grind our corn at his mill, obliged to feed scores of his tame birds on our wretched crops, and forbidden for our lives to keep a single tame bird of our own, pillaged and plundered to that degree that when we chanced to have a bit of meat, we ate it in fear, with the door barred and the shutters closed, that his people should not see it and take it from us—I say, we were so robbed, and hunted, and were made so poor, that our father told us it was a dreadful thing to bring a child into the world, and that what we should most pray for, was, that our women might be barren and our miserable race die out.’

“I had never before seen the sense of being oppressed, bursting forth like a fire. I had supposed that it must be latent in the people somewhere; but, I had never seen it break out, until I saw it in the dying boy.

“‘Nevertheless, Doctor, my sister married. He was ailing at that time, poor fellow, and she married her lover, that she might tend and comfort him in our cottage—our dog-hut, as that man would call it. She had not been married many weeks, when that man’s brother saw her and admired her, and asked that man to lend her to him—for what are husbands among us! He was willing enough, but my sister was good and virtuous, and hated his brother with a hatred as strong as mine. What did the two then, to persuade her husband to use his influence with her, to make her willing?’

“The boy’s eyes, which had been fixed on mine, slowly turned to the looker-on, and I saw in the two faces that all he said was true. The two opposing kinds of pride confronting one another, I can see, even in this Bastille:

the gentleman's, all negligent indifference ; the peasant's, all trodden-down sentiment, and passionate revenge.

“ ‘ You know, Doctor, that it is among the Rights of these Nobles to harness us common dogs to carts, and drive us. They so harnessed him and drove him. You know that it is among their Rights to keep us in their grounds all night, quieting the frogs, in order that their noble sleep may not be disturbed. They kept him out in the unwholesome mists at night, and ordered him back into his harness in the day. But he was not persuaded. No ! Taken out of harness one day at noon, to feed—if he could find food—he sobbed twelve times, once for every stroke of the bell, and died on her bosom.’ ”

“ ‘ Nothing human could have held life in the boy but his determination to tell all his wrong. He forced back the gathering shadows of death, as he forced his clenched right hand to remain clenched, and to cover his wound. ”

“ ‘ Then, with that man's permission and even with his aid, his brother took her away ; in spite of what I know she must have told his brother—and what that is, will not be long unknown to you, Doctor, if it is now—his brother took her away—for his pleasure and diversion, for a little while. I saw her pass me on the road. When I took the tidings home, our father's heart burst ; he never spoke one of the words that filled it. I took my young sister (for I have another) to a place beyond the reach of this man, and where, at least, she will never be his vassal. Then, I tracked the brother here, and last night climbed in—a common dog, but sword in hand.—Where is the loft window ? It was somewhere here ? ’ ”

“ ‘ The room was darkening to his sight ; the world was narrowing around him. I glanced about me, and saw that the hay and straw were trampled over the floor, as if there had been a struggle. ”

“ ‘ She heard me, and ran in. I told her not to come near us till he was dead. He came in and first tossed me some pieces of money ; then struck at me with a whip. But I, though a common dog, so struck at him as to make him draw. Let him break into as many pieces as he will, the sword that he stained with my common blood ; he drew to defend himself—thrust at me with all his skill for his life.’ ”

“ ‘ My glance had fallen, but a few moments before, on the fragments of a broken sword, lying among the hay. That weapon was a gentleman's. In another place, lay an old sword that seemed to have been a soldier's. ”

“ ‘ Now, lift me up, Doctor ; lift me up. Where is he ? ’ ”

“ ‘ He is not here,’ I said, supporting the boy, and thinking that he referred to the brother. ”

“ ‘He! Proud as these nobles are, he is afraid to see me. Where is the man who was here? Turn my face to him.’

“I did so, raising the boy’s head against my knee. But, invested for the moment with extraordinary power, he raised himself completely: obliging me to rise too, or I could not have still supported him.

“ ‘Marquis,’ said the boy, turned to him with his eyes opened wide and his right hand raised, ‘in the days when all these things are to be answered for, I summon you, and yours to the last of your bad race, to answer for them. I mark this cross of blood upon you, as a sign that I do it. In the days when all these things are to be answered for, I summon your brother, the worst of the bad race, to answer for them separately. I mark this cross of blood upon him, as a sign that I do it.’

“Twice, he put his hand to the wound in his breast, and with his forefinger drew a cross in the air. He stood for an instant with the finger yet raised, and, as it dropped, he dropped with it, and I laid him down dead. * * * *

“When I returned to the bedside of the young woman, I found her raving in precisely the same order and continuity. I knew that this might last for many hours, and that it would probably end in the silence of the grave.

“I repeated the medicines I had given her, and I sat at the side of the bed until the night was far advanced. She never abated the piercing quality of her shrieks, never stumbled in the distinctness or the order of her words. They were always ‘My husband, my father, and my brother! One, two, three, four, five, six, seven, eight, nine, ten, eleven, twelve. Hush!’

“This lasted twenty-six hours from the time when I first saw her. I had come and gone twice, and was again sitting by her, when she began to falter. I did what little could be done to assist that opportunity, and by-and-by she sank into a lethargy, and lay like the dead.

“It was as if the wind and rain had lulled at last, after a long and fearful storm. I released her arms, and called the woman to assist me to compose her figure and the dress she had torn. It was then that I knew her condition to be that of one in whom the first expectations of being a mother have arisen; and it was then that I lost the little hope I had had of her.

“ ‘Is she dead?’ asked the Marquis, whom I will still describe as the elder brother, coming booted into the room from his horse.

“ ‘Not dead,’ said I; ‘but like to die.’



TWICE HE PUT HIS HAND TO THE WOUND IN HIS BREAST, AND DREW A CROSS IN THE AIR.
—A Tale of Two Cities, Vol. Eleven, page 290

“ ‘What strength there is in these common bodies!’ he said, looking down at her with some curiosity.

“ ‘There is prodigious strength,’ I answered him, ‘in sorrow and despair.’

“ He first laughed at my words, and then frowned at them. He moved a chair with his foot near to mine, ordered the woman away, and said in a subdued voice,

“ ‘Doctor, finding my brother in this difficulty with these hinds, I recommended that your aid should be invited. Your reputation is high, and, as a young man with your fortune to make, you are probably mindful of your interest. The things that you see here, are things to be seen, and not spoken of.’

“ I listened to the patient’s breathing, and avoided answering.

“ ‘Do you honour me with your attention, Doctor?’

“ ‘Monsieur,’ said I, ‘in my profession, the communications of patients are always received in confidence.’ I was guarded in my answer, for I was troubled in my mind by what I had heard and seen.

“ Her breathing was so difficult to trace, that I carefully tried the pulse and the heart. There was life, and no more. Looking round as I resumed my seat, I found both the brothers intent upon me. * * * * *

“ I write with so much difficulty, the cold is so severe, I am so fearful of being detected and consigned to an underground cell and total darkness, that I must abridge this narrative. There is no confusion or failure in my memory; it can recal, and could detail, every word that was ever spoken between me and those brothers.

“ She lingered for a week. Towards the last, I could understand some few syllables that she said to me, by placing my ear close to her lips. She asked me where she was, and I told her; who I was, and I told her. It was in vain that I asked her for her family name. She faintly shook her head upon the pillow, and kept her secret as the boy had done.

“ I had no opportunity of asking her any question, until I had told the brothers she was sinking fast, and could not live another day. Until then, though no one was ever presented to her consciousness save the woman and myself, one or other of them had always jealously sat behind the curtain at the head of the bed when I was there. But when it came to that, they seemed careless what communication I might hold with her; as if—the thought passed through my mind—I were dying too.

“ I always observed that their pride bitterly resented the younger brother’s (as I call him) having crossed swords with a peasant, and that peasant a boy. The only consideration that appeared really to affect the

mind of either of them, was the consideration that this was highly degrading to the family, and was ridiculous. As often as I caught the younger brother's eyes, their expression reminded me that he disliked me deeply, for knowing what I knew from the boy. He was smoother and more polite to me than the elder; but I saw this. I also saw that I was an encumbrance in the mind of the elder too.

"My patient died, two hours before midnight—at a time, by my watch, answering almost to the minute when I had first seen her. I was alone with her, when her forlorn young head drooped gently on one side, and all her earthly wrongs and sorrows ended.

"The brothers were waiting in a room down-stairs, impatient to ride away. I had heard them, alone at the bedside, striking their boots with their riding-whips, and loitering up and down.

"'At last she is dead?' said the elder, when I went in:

"'She is dead,' said I.

"'I congratulate you, my brother,' were his words as he turned round.

"He had before offered me money, which I had postponed taking. He now gave me a rouleau of gold. I took it from his hand, but laid it on the table. I had considered the question, and had resolved to accept nothing.

"'Pray excuse me,' said I. 'Under the circumstances, no.'

"They exchanged looks, but bent their heads to me as I bent mine to them, and we parted without another word on either side. * * * *

"I am weary, weary, weary—worn down by misery. I cannot read what I have written with this gaunt hand.

"Early in the morning, the rouleau of gold was left at my door in a little box, with my name on the outside. From the first, I had anxiously considered what I ought to do. I decided, that day, to write privately to the Minister, stating the nature of the two cases to which I had been summoned, and the place to which I had gone: in effect, stating all the circumstances. I knew what Court influence was, and what the immunities of the Nobles were, and I expected that the matter would never be heard of; but, I wished to relieve my own mind. I had kept the matter a profound secret, even from my wife; and this, too, I resolved to state in my letter. I had no apprehension whatever of my real danger; but, I was conscious that there might be danger for others, if others were compromised by possessing the knowledge that I possessed.

"I was much engaged that day, and could not com-

plete my letter that night. I rose long before my usual time next morning to finish it. It was the last day of the year. The letter was lying before me, just completed, when I was told that a lady waited, who wished to see me. * * *

“I am growing more and more unequal to the task I have set myself. It is so cold, so dark, my senses are so benumbed, and the gloom upon me is so dreadful.

“The lady was young, engaging, and handsome, but not marked for long life. She was in great agitation. She presented herself to me, as the wife of the Marquis St. Evrémonde. I connected the title by which the boy had addressed the elder brother, with the initial letter embroidered on the scarf, and, had do difficulty in arriving at the conclusion that I had seen that nobleman very lately.

“My memory is still accurate, but I cannot write the words of our conversation. I suspect that I am watched more closely than I was, and I know not at what times I may be watched. She had in part suspected, and in part discovered, the main facts of the cruel story, of her husband's share in it, and my being resorted to. She did not know that the girl was dead. Her hope had been, she said in great distress, to show her, in secret, a woman's sympathy. Her hope had been to avert the wrath of Heaven from a House that had long been hateful to the suffering many.

“She had reasons for believing that there was a young sister living, and her greatest desire was to help that sister. I could tell her nothing but that there was such a sister; beyond that, I knew nothing. Her inducement to come to me, relying on my confidence, had been the hope that I could tell her the name and place of abode. Whereas, to this wretched hour I am ignorant of both. * * * *

“These scraps of paper fail me. One was taken from me, with a warning, yesterday. I must finish my record to-day.

“She was a good, compassionate lady, and not happy in her marriage. How could she be! The brother distrusted and disliked her, and his influence was all opposed to her; she stood in dread of him, and in dread of her husband too. When I handed her down to the door, there was a child, a pretty boy from two to three years old in her carriage.

“‘For his sake, Doctor,’ she said, pointing to him in tears, ‘I would do all I can to make what poor amends I can. He will never prosper in his inheritance otherwise. I have a presentiment that if no other innocent atonement is made for this, it will one day be required of him. What I have left to call my own—it is little

beyond the worth of a few jewels—I will make it the first charge of his life to bestow, with the compassion and lamenting of his dead mother, on this injured family, if the sister can be discovered.’

“She kissed the boy, and said, caressing him, ‘It is for thine own dear sake. Thou wilt be faithful, little Charles?’ The child answered her bravely, ‘Yes!’ I kissed her hand, and she took him in her arms, and went away caressing him. I never saw her more.

“As she had mentioned her husband’s name in the faith that I knew it, I added no mention of it to my letter. I sealed my letter, and, not trusting it out of my own hands, delivered it myself that day.

“That night, the last night of the year, towards nine o’clock, a man in a black dress rang at my gate, demanded to see me, and softly followed my servant, Ernest Defarge, a youth, up-stairs. When my servant came into the room where I sat with my wife—O my wife, beloved of my heart! My fair young English wife!—we saw the man, who was supposed to be at the gate, standing silent behind him.

“An urgent case in the Rue St. Honoré, he said. It would not detain me, he had a coach in waiting.

“It brought me here, it brought me to my grave. When I was clear of the house, a black muffler was drawn tightly over my mouth from behind, and my arms were pinioned. The two brothers crossed the road from a dark corner, and identified me with a single gesture. The Marquis took from his pocket a letter I had written, showed it me, burnt it in the light of a lantern that was held, and extinguished the ashes with his foot. Not a word was spoken. I was brought here, I was brought to my living grave.

“If it had pleased GOD to put it in the hard heart of either of the brothers, in all these frightful years, to grant me any tidings of my dearest wife—so much as to let me know by a word whether alive or dead—I might have thought that He had not quite abandoned them. But, now I believe that the mark of the red cross is fatal to them, and that they have no part in His mercies. And them and their descendants, to the last of their race, I Alexandre Manette, unhappy prisoner, do this last night of the year 1767, in my unbearable agony, denounce to the times when all these things shall be answered for. I denounce them to Heaven and to earth.”

A terrible sound arose when the reading of this document was done. A sound of craving and eagerness that had nothing articulate in it but blood. The narrative called up the most revengeful passions of the time, and

there was not a head in the nation but must have dropped before it.

Little need, in presence of that tribunal and that auditory, to show how the Defarges had not made the paper public, with the other captured Bastille memorials borne in procession, and had kept it, biding their time. Little need to show that this detested family name had been long anathematised by Saint Antoine, and was wrought into the fatal register. The man never trod ground, whose virtues and services would have sustained him in that place that day, against such denunciation.

And all the worse for the doomed man, that the denouncer was a well-known citizen, his own attached friend, the father of his wife. One of the frenzied aspirations of the populace was, for imitations of the questionable public virtues of antiquity, and for sacrifices and self-immolations on the people's altar. Therefore, when the President said (else had his own head quivered on his shoulders) that the good physician of the Republic would deserve better still of the Republic by rooting out an obnoxious family of Aristocrats, and would doubtless feel a sacred glow and joy in making his daughter a widow and her child an orphan, there was wild excitement, patriotic fervour, not a touch of human sympathy.

"Much influence around him, has that Doctor?" murmured Madame Defarge, smiling to The Vengeance. "Save him now, my Doctor, save him!"

At every juryman's vote, there was a roar. Another and another. Roar and roar.

Unanimously voted. At heart and by descent an Aristocrat, an enemy of the Republic, a notorious oppressor of the People. Back to the Conciergerie, and Death within four-and-twenty hours!

CHAPTER XI.

Dusk.

THE wretched wife of the innocent man thus doomed to die, fell under the sentence, as if she had been mortally stricken. But, she uttered no sound; and so strong was the voice within her, representing that it was she of all the world who must uphold him in his misery and not augment it, that it quickly raised her, even from that shock.

The judges having to take part in a public demonstration out of doors the tribunal adjourned. The quick noise and movement of the court's emptying itself by

many passages had not ceased, when Lucie stood stretching out her arms towards her husband, with nothing in her face but love and consolation.

"If I might touch him! If I might embrace him once! O, good citizens, if you would have so much compassion for us!"

There was but a gaoler left, along with two of the four men who had taken him last night, and Barsad. The people had all poured out to the show in the streets. Barsad proposed to the rest, "Let her embrace him, then; it is but a moment." It was silently acquiesced in, and they passed her over the seats in the hall to a raised place, where he, by leaning over the dock, could fold her in his arms.

"Farewell, dear darling of my soul. My parting blessing on my love. We shall meet again, where the weary are at rest!"

They were her husband's words, as he held her to his bosom.

"I can bear it, dear Charles. I am supported from above; don't suffer for me. A parting blessing for our child."

"I send it to her by you. I kiss her by you. I say farewell to her by you."

"My husband. No! A moment!" He was tearing himself apart from her. "We shall not be separated long. I feel that this will break my heart by-and-by; but I will do my duty while I can, and when I leave her, God will raise up friends for her, as He did for me."

Her father had followed her, and would have fallen on his knees to both of them, but that Darnay put out a hand and seized him, crying:

"No, no! What have you done, what have you done, that you should kneel to us! We know now, what a struggle you made of old. We know now, what you underwent when you suspected my descent, and when you knew it. We know now, the natural antipathy you strove against, and conquered, for her dear sake. We thank you with all our hearts, and all our love and duty. Heaven be with you!"

Her father's only answer was to draw his hands through his white hair, and wring them with a shriek of anguish.

"It could not be otherwise," said the prisoner. "All things have worked together as they have fallen out. It was the always vain endeavour to discharge my poor mother's trust, that first brought my fatal presence near you. Good could never come of such evil, a happier end was not in nature to so unhappy a beginning. Be comforted, and forgive me. Heaven bless you!"



AS HE WAS DRAWN AWAY, HIS WIFE RELEASED HIM, AND STOOD LOOKING AFTER HIM.
—A Tale of Two Cities, Vol. Eleven, page 297.

As he was drawn away, his wife released him, and stood looking after him with her hands touching one another in the attitude of prayer, and with a radiant look upon her face, in which there was even a comforting smile. As he went out at the prisoners' door, she turned, laid her head lovingly on her father's breast, tried to speak to him, and fell at his feet.

Then, issuing from the obscure corner from which he had never moved, Sydney Carton came and took her up. Only her father and Mr. Lorry were with her. His arm trembled as it raised her, and supported her head. Yet, there was an air about him that was not all of pity—that had a flush of pride in it.

“Shall I take her to a coach? I shall never feel her weight?”

He carried her lightly to the door, and laid her tenderly down in a coach. Her father and their old friend got into it, and he took his seat beside the driver.

When they arrived at the gateway where he had paused in the dark not many hours before, to picture to himself on which of the rough stones of the street her feet had trodden, he lifted her again, and carried her up the staircase to their rooms. There, he laid her down on a couch, where her child and Miss Pross wept over her.

“Don't recal her to herself,” he said, softly, to the latter, “she is better so; don't revive her to consciousness, while she only faints.”

“Oh, Carton, Carton, dear Carton!” cried little Lucie, springing up and throwing her arms passionately round him, in a burst of grief. “Now that you have come, I think you will do something to help mamma, something to save papa! O, look at her, dear Carton! Can you, of all the people who love her, bear to see her so?”

He bent over the child, and laid her blooming cheek against his face. He put her gently from him, and looked at her unconscious mother.

“Before I go,” he said, and paused.—“I may kiss her?”

It was remembered afterwards that when he bent down and touched her face with his lips, he murmured some words. The child, who was nearest to him, told them afterwards, and told her grandchildren when she was a handsome old lady, that she heard him say, “A life you love.”

When he had gone out into the next room, he turned suddenly on Mr. Lorry and her father, who were following, and said to the latter:

“You had great influence but yesterday, Doctor Manette; let it, at least, be tried. These judges, and all the

men in power, are very friendly to you, and very recognisant of your services ; are they not ? ”

“ Nothing connected with Charles was concealed from me. I had the strongest assurances that I should save him ; and I did. ” He returned the answer in great trouble, and very slowly.

“ Try them again. The hours between this and to-morrow afternoon are few and short, but try. ”

“ I intend to try. I will not rest a moment. ”

“ That’s well. I have known such energy as yours do great things before now—though never, ” he added, with a smile and a sigh together, “ such great things as this. But try ! Of little worth as life is when we misuse it, it is worth that effort. It would cost nothing to lay down if it were not. ”

“ I will go, ” said Doctor Manette, “ to the Prosecutor and the President straight, and I will go to others whom it is better not to name. I will write too, and—But stay ! There is a celebration in the streets, and no one will be accessible until dark. ”

“ That’s true. Well ! It is a forlorn hope at the best, and not much the forlorn for being delayed till dark. I should like to know how you speed ; though, mind ! I expect nothing ! When are you likely to have seen these dread powers, Doctor Manette ? ”

“ Immediately after dark, I should hope. Within an hour or two from this. ”

“ It will be dark soon after four. Let us stretch the hour or two. If I go to Mr. Lorry’s at nine, shall I hear what you have done, either from our friend or from yourself ? ”

“ Yes. ”

“ May you prosper ! ”

Mr. Lorry followed Sydney to the outer door, and, touching him on the shoulder as he was going away, caused him to turn.

“ I have no hope, ” said Mr. Lorry, in a low and sorrowful whisper.

“ Nor have I. ”

“ If any one of these men, or all of these men, were disposed to spare him—which is a large supposition ; for what is his life, or any man’s to them !—I doubt if they durst spare him after the demonstration in the court. ”

“ And so do I. I heard the fall of the axe in that sound. ”

Mr. Lorry leaned his arm upon the door-post, and bowed his face upon it.

“ Don’t despond, ” said Carton, very gently ; “ don’t grieve. I encouraged Doctor Manette in this idea, because I felt that it might one day be consolatory to her. ”

Otherwise, she might think 'his life was wantonly thrown away or wasted,' and that might trouble her."

"Yes, yes, yes," returned Mr. Lorry, drying his eyes, "you are right. But he will perish; there is no real hope."

"Yes. He will perish; there is no real hope," echoed Carton. And walked with a settled step, down stairs.

CHAPTER XII.

Darkness.

SYDNEY CARTON paused in the street, not quite decided where to go. "At Tellson's banking-house at nine," he said, with a musing face. "Shall I do well, in the mean time, to show myself? I think so. It is best that these people should know there is such a man as I here; it is a sound precaution, and may be a necessary preparation. But care, care, care! Let me think it out!"

Checking his steps which had begun to tend towards an object, he took a turn or two in the already darkening street, and traced the thought in his mind to its possible consequences. His first impression was confirmed. "It is best," he said, finally resolved, "that these people should know there is such a man as I here." And he turned his face towards Saint Antoine.

Defarge had described himself, that day, as the keeper of a wine-shop in the Saint Antoine suburb. It was not difficult for one who knew the city well, to find his house without asking any question. Having ascertained its situation, Carton came out of those closer streets again, and dined at a place of refreshment and fell sound asleep after dinner. For the first time in many years, he had no strong drink. Since last night he had taken nothing but a little light wine, and last night he had dropped the brandy slowly down on Mr. Lorry's hearth like a man who had done with it.

It was as late as seven o'clock when he awoke refreshed, and went out into the streets again. As he passed along towards Saint Antoine, he stopped at a shop-window where there was a mirror, and slightly altered the disordered arrangement of his loose cravat, and his coat-collar, and his wild hair. This done, he went on direct to Defarge's, and went in.

There happened to be no customer in the shop but Jacques Three, of the restless fingers and the croaking voice. This man whom he had seen upon the Jury, stood drinking at the little counter, in conversation with

the Defarges, man and wife. The Vengeance assisted in the conversation, like a regular member of the establishment.

As Carton walked in, took his seat, and asked (in very indifferent French) for a small measure of wine, Madame Defarge cast a careless glance at him, and then a keener, and then a keener, and then advanced to him herself, and asked him what it was he had ordered.

He repeated what he had already said.

"English?" asked Madame Defarge, inquisitively raising her dark eyebrows.

After looking at her, as if the sound of even a single French word were slow to express itself to him, he answered, in his former strong foreign accent. "Yes, madame, yes. I am English!"

Madame Defarge returned to her counter to get the wine, and, as he took up a Jacobin journal and feigned to pore over it puzzling out its meaning, he heard her say, "I swear to you, like Evrémonde!"

Defarge brought him the wine, and gave him Good Evening.

How?"

"Good evening."

"Oh! Good evening, citizen," filling his glass. "Ah! and good wine. I drink to the Republic."

Defarge went to the counter, and said, "Certainly, a little like." Madame sternly retorted, "I tell you a good deal like." Jacques Three pacifically remarked, "He is so much in your mind, see you, madame." The amiable Vengeance added, with a laugh, "Yes, my faith! And you are looking forward with so much pleasure to seeing him once more to-morrow!"

Carton followed the lines and words of his paper, with a slow forefinger, and with a studious and absorbed face. They were all leaning their arms on the counter close together, speaking low. After a silence of a few moments, during which they all looked towards him without disturbing his outward attention from the Jacobin editor, they resumed their conversation.

"It is true what madame says," observed Jacques Three. "Why stop? There is great force in that. Why stop?"

"Well, well," reasoned Defarge, "but one must stop somewhere. After all, the question is still where?"

"At extermination," said madame.

"Magnificent!" croaked Jacques Three. The Vengeance, also, highly approved.

"Extermination is good doctrine, my wife," said Defarge, rather troubled; "in general, I say nothing against it. But this Doctor has suffered much; you have seen him to-day; you have observed his face when the paper was read."

“I have observed his face!” repeated madame contemptuously and angrily. “Yes, I have observed his face. I have observed his face to be not the face of a true friend of the Republic. Let him take care of his face!”

“And you have observed, my wife,” said Defarge, in a deprecatory manner, “the anguish of his daughter, which must be dreadful anguish to him!”

“I have observed his daughter,” repeated madame; “yes, I have observed his daughter, more times than one. I have observed her to-day, and I have observed her other days. I have observed her in the court, and I have observed her in the street by the prison. Let me but lift my finger—!” She seemed to raise it (the listener’s eyes were always on his paper), and to let it fall with a rattle on the ledge before her, as if the axe had dropped.

“The citizeness is superb!” croaked the Juryman.

“She is an Angel!” said The Vengeance, and embraced her.

“As to thee,” pursued madame, implacably, addressing her husband, “if it depended on thee—which, happily, it does not—thou wouldst rescue this man even now.”

“No!” protested Defarge. “Not if to lift this glass would do it? But I would leave the matter there. I say, stop there.”

“See you then, Jacques,” said Madame Defarge, wrathfully; “and see you, too, my little Vengeance; see you both! Listen! For other crimes as tyrants and oppressors, I have this race a long time on my register, doomed to destruction and extermination. Ask my husband is that so.”

“It is so,” assented Defarge, without being asked.

“In the beginning of the great days, when the Bastille falls, he finds this paper of to-day, and he brings it home, and in the middle of the night when this place is clear and shut, we read it, here on this spot, by the light of this lamp. Ask him, is that so.”

“It is so,” assented Defarge.

“That night, I tell him, when the paper is read through, and the lamp is burnt out, and the day is gleaming in above those shutters and between those iron bars, that I have now a secret to communicate. Ask him, is that so.”

“It is so,” assented Defarge again.

“I communicate to him that secret. I smite this bosom with these two hands as I smite it now, and I tell him, ‘Defarge, I was brought up among the fishermen of the sea-shore, and that peasant-family so injured by the two Evrémonde brothers, as that Bastille paper de-

scribes, is my family. Defarge, that sister of the mortally wounded boy upon the ground was my sister, that husband was my sister's husband, that unborn child was their child, that brother was my brother, that father was my father, those dead are my dead, and that summons to answer for those things descends to me !' Ask him, is that so."

"It is so," assented Defarge once more.

"Then tell Wind and Fire where to stop," returned madame ; "but don't tell me."

Both her hearers derived a horrible enjoyment from the deadly nature of her wrath—the listener could feel how white she was, without seeing her—and both highly commended it. Defarge, a weak minority, interposed a few words for the memory of the compassionate wife of the Marquis ; but, only elicited from his own wife a repetition of her last reply. "Tell the Wind and the Fire where to stop ; not me !"

Customers entered, and the group was broken up. The English customer paid for what he had had, perplexedly counted his change, and asked, as a stranger, to be directed towards the National Palace. Madame Defarge took him to the door, and put her arm on his, in pointing out the road. The English customer was not without his reflections then, that it might be a good deed to seize that arm, lift it, and strike under it sharp and deep.

But, he went his way, and was soon swallowed up in the shadow of the prison wall. At the appointed hour, he emerged from it to present himself in Mr. Lorry's room again, where he found the old gentleman walking to and fro in restless anxiety. He said he had been with Lucie until just now, and had only left for a few minutes, to come and keep his appointment. Her father had not been seen since he quitted the banking-house towards four o'clock. She had some faint hopes that his meditation might save Charles, but they were very slight. He had been more than five hours gone ; where could he be ?

Mr. Lorry waited until ten ; but Doctor Manette not returning, and he being unwilling to leave Lucie any longer, it was arranged that he should go back to her, and come to the banking-house again at midnight. In the meanwhile, Carton would wait alone by the fire for the Doctor.

He waited and waited, and the clock struck twelve ; but, Doctor Manette did not come back. Mr. Lorry returned, and found no tidings of him, and brought none. Where could he be ?

They were discussing this question, and were almost building up some weak structure of hope on his pro-

longed absence, when they heard him on the stairs. The instant he entered the room, it was plain that all was lost.

Whether he had really been to any one, or whether he had been all that time traversing the streets, was never known. As he stood staring at them, they asked him no question, for his face told them everything.

"I cannot find it," said he, "and I must have it. Where is it?"

His head and throat were bare, and, as he spoke with a helpless look straying all around, he took his coat off, and let it drop on the floor.

"Where is my bench? I have been looking everywhere for my bench, and I can't find it. What have they done with my work? Time presses: I must finish those shoes."

They looked at one another, and their hearts died within them.

"Come, come!" said he, in a whimpering miserable way; "let me get to work. Give me my work."

Receiving no answer, he tore his hair, and beat his feet upon the ground, like a distracted child.

"Don't torture a poor forlorn wretch," he implored them, with a dreadful cry; "but give me my work! What is to become of us, if those shoes are not done to-night?"

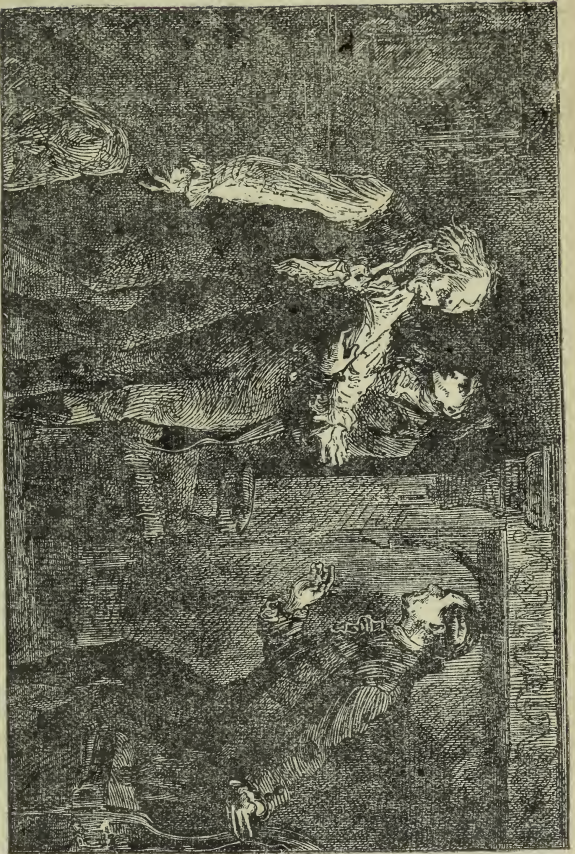
Lost, utterly lost!

It was so clearly beyond hope, to reason with him, or try to restore him, that—as if by agreement—they each put a hand upon his shoulder, and soothed him to sit down before the fire, with a promise that he should have his work presently. He sank into the chair, and brooded over the embers, and shed tears. As if all that had happened since the garret time were a momentary fancy, or a dream, Mr. Lorry saw him shrink into the exact figure that Defarge had had in keeping.

Affected and impressed with terror as they both were, by this spectacle of ruin, it was not a time to yield to such emotions. His lonely daughter, bereft of her final hope and reliance, appealed to them both, too strongly. Again, as if by agreement, they looked at one another with one meaning in their faces. Carton was the first to speak

"The last chance is gone: it was not much. Yes; he had better be taken to her. But, before you go, will you, for a moment, steadily attend to me? Don't ask me why I make the stipulations I am going to make, and exact the promise I am going to exact; I have a reason—a good one."

"I do not doubt it," answered Mr. Lorry. "Say on."



HIS HEAD AND THROAT WERE BARE, AND HE TOOK HIS COAT OFF, AND LET IT DROP ON THE FLOOR.
—A Tale of Two Cities, Vol. Eleven, page 305.

The figure in the chair between them, was all the time monotonously rocking itself to and fro, and moaning. They spoke in such a tone as they would have used if they had been watching by a sick-bed in the night.

Carton stooped to pick up the coat, which lay almost entangling his feet. As he did so, a small case in which the Doctor was accustomed to carry the list of his day's duties, fell lightly on the floor. Carton took it up, and there was a folded paper in it. "We should look at this?" he said. Mr. Lorry nodded his consent. He opened it, and exclaimed, "Thank GOD!"

"What is it?" asked Mr. Lorry, eagerly.

"A moment! Let me speak of it in its place. First," he put his hand in his coat, and took another paper from it, "that is the certificate which enables me to pass out of this city. Look at it. You see—Sydney Carton, an Englishman?"

Mr. Lorry held it open in his hand, gazing in his earnest face.

"Keep it for me until to-morrow. I shall see him to-morrow, you remember, and I had better not take it into the prison."

"Why not?"

"I don't know: I prefer not to do so. Now, take this paper that Doctor Manette has carried about him. It is a similar certificate, enabling him and his daughter and her child, at any time, to pass the Barrier and the frontier? You see?"

"Yes!"

"Perhaps he obtained it as his last and utmost precaution against evil, yesterday. When is it dated? But no matter; don't stay to look; put it up carefully with mine and your own. Now, observe! I never doubted until within this hour or two, that he had, or could have, such a paper. It is good, until recalled. But it may be soon recalled, and, I have reason to think, will be."

"They are not in danger?"

"They are in great danger. They are in danger of denunciation by Madame Defarge. I know it from her own lips. I have overheard words of that woman's, to-night, which have presented their danger to me in strong colours. I have lost no time, and since then, I have seen the spy. He confirms me. He knows that a wood-sawyer, living by the prison wall, is under the control of the Defarges, and has been rehearsed by Madame Defarge, as to his having seen Her"—he never mentioned Lucie's name—"making signs and signals to prisoners. It is easy to foresee that the pretence will be the common one, a prison plot, and that it will involve her life—and perhaps her child's—and perhaps her father's—for both have

been seen with her at that place. Don't look so horrified. You will save them all."

"Heaven grant I may, Carton! But how?"

"I am going to tell you how. It will depend on you, and it could depend on no better man. This new denunciation will certainly not take place until after to-morrow; probably not until two or three days afterwards; more probably a week afterwards. You know it is a capital crime, to mourn for, or sympathise with, a victim of the Guillotine. She and her father would unquestionably be guilty of this crime, and this woman (the inveteracy of whose pursuit cannot be described) would wait to add that strength to her case, and make herself doubly sure. You follow me?"

"So attentively, and with so much confidence in what you say, that for the moment I lose sight," touching the back of the Doctor's chair, "even of this distress."

"You have money, and can buy the means of travelling to the sea-coast as quickly as the journey can be made. Your preparations have been completed for some days, to return to England. Early to-morrow, have your horses ready, so that they may be in starting trim at two o'clock in the afternoon."

"It shall be done!"

His manner was so fervent and inspiring, that Mr. Lorry caught the flame, and was as quick as youth.

"You are a noble heart. Did I say we could depend upon no better man? Tell her, to-night, what you know of her danger as involving her child and her father. Dwell upon that, for she would lay her own fair head beside her husband's, cheerfully." He faltered for an instant; then went on as before. "For the sake of her child and her father, press upon her the necessity of leaving Paris, with them and you, at that hour. Tell her that it was her husband's last arrangement. Tell her that more depends upon it than she dare believe, or hope. You think her father, even in this sad state, will submit himself to her; do you not?"

"I am sure of it."

"I thought so. Quietly and steadily, have all these arrangements been made in the court-yard here, even to the taking of your own seat in the carriage. The moment I come to you, take me in, and drive away."

"I understand that I wait for you, under all circumstances?"

"You have my certificate in your hand with the rest, you know, and will reserve my place. Wait for nothing but to have my place occupied, and then for England!"

"Why, then," said Mr. Lorry, grasping his eager but so firm and steady hand, "it does not all depend on one

old man, but I shall have a young and ardent man at my side."

"By the help of Heaven you shall! Promise me solemnly, that nothing will influence you to alter the course on which we now stand pledged to one another."

"Nothing, Carton."

"Remember these words to-morrow: change the course, or delay in it—for any reason—and no life can possibly be saved, and many lives must inevitably be sacrificed."

"I will remember them. I hope to do my part faithfully."

"And I hope to do mine. Now, good-bye!"

Though he said it with a grave smile of earnestness, and though he even put the old man's hand to his lips, he did not part from him then. He helped him so far to arouse the rocking figure before the dying embers, as to get a cloak and hat put upon it, and to tempt it forth to find where the bench and work were hidden that it still moaningly besought to have. He walked on the other side of it and protected it to the court-yard of the house where the afflicted heart—so happy in the memorable time when he had revealed his own desolate heart to it—outwatched the awful night. He entered the court-yard and remained there for a few moments alone, looking up at the light in the window of her room. Before he went away, he breathed a blessing towards it, and a Farewell.

CHAPTER XIII.

Fifty-two.

In the black prison of the Conciergerie, the doomed of the day awaited their fate. They were in number as the weeks of the year. Fifty-two were to roll that afternoon on the life-tide of the city to the boundless everlasting sea. Before their cells were quit of them, new occupants were appointed; before their blood ran into the blood spilled yesterday, the blood that was to mingle with theirs to-morrow was already set apart.

Two score and twelve were told off. From the farmer-general of seventy, whose riches could not buy his life, to the seamstress of twenty, whose poverty and obscurity could not save her. Physical diseases engendered in the vices and neglects of men, will seize on victims of all degrees; and the frightful moral disorder, born of unspeakable suffering, intolerable oppression, and heartless indifference, smote equally without distinction.

Charles Darnay, alone in a cell, had sustained himself with no flattering delusion since he came to it from the Tribunal. In every line of the narrative he had heard,

he had heard his condemnation. He had fully comprehended that no personal influence could possibly save him, that he was virtually sentenced by the millions, and that units could avail him nothing.

Nevertheless, it was not easy, with the face of his beloved wife fresh before him, to compose his mind to what it must bear. His hold on life was strong, and it was very, very hard to loosen; by gradual efforts and degrees unclosed a little here, it clenched the tighter there; and when he brought his strength to bear on that hand and it yielded, this was closed again. There was a hurry, too, in all his thoughts, a turbulent and heated working of his heart, that contended against resignation. If, for a moment, he did feel resigned, then his wife and child who had to live after him, seemed to protest and to make it a selfish thing.

But, all this was at first. Before long, the consideration that there was no disgrace in the fate he must meet, and that numbers went the same road wrongfully, and trod it firmly, every day, sprang up to stimulate him. Next followed the thought that much of the future peace of mind enjoyable by the dear ones, depended on his quiet fortitude. So, by degrees he calmed into the better state, when he could raise his thoughts much higher, and draw comfort down.

Before it had set in dark on the night of his condemnation, he had travelled thus far on his last way. Being allowed to purchase the means of writing, and a light, he sat down to write until such time as the prison lamps should be extinguished.

He wrote a long letter to Lucie, showing her that he had known nothing of her father's imprisonment until he had heard of it from herself, and that he had been as ignorant as she of his father's and uncle's responsibility for that misery, until the paper had been read. He had already explained to her that his concealment from herself of the name he had relinquished, was the one condition—fully intelligible now—that her father had attached to their betrothal, and was the one promise he had still exacted on the morning of their marriage. He entreated her, for her father's sake, never to seek to know whether her father had become oblivious of the existence of the paper, or had had it recalled to him (for the moment, or for good, by the story of the Tower, on that old Sunday under the dear plane-tree in the garden. If he had preserved any definite remembrance of it, there could be no doubt that he had supposed it destroyed with the Bastille, when he had found no mention of it among the relics of prisoners which the populace had discovered there, and which had been described to all the world. He besought her—though he added that

he knew it was needless—to console her father, by impressing him through every tender means she could think of, with the truth that he had done nothing for which he could justly reproach himself, but had uniformly forgotten himself for their joint sakes. Next to her preservation of his own last grateful love and blessing, and her overcoming of her sorrow, to devote herself to their dear child, he adjured her, as they would meet in Heaven, to comfort her father.

To her father himself, he wrote in the same strain; but, he told her father that he expressly confided his wife and child to his care. And he told him this, very strongly, with the hope of rousing him from any despondency or dangerous retrospect towards which he foresaw he might be tending.

To Mr. Lorry, he commended them all, and explained his worldly affairs. That done, with many added sentences of grateful friendship and warm attachment, all was done. He never thought of Carton. His mind was so full of the others, that he never once thought of him.

He had time to finish these letters before the lights were put out. When he lay down on his straw bed, he thought he had done with this world.

But, it beckoned him back in his sleep, and showed itself in shining forms. Free and happy, back in the old house in Soho (though it had nothing in it like the real house), unaccountably released and light of heart, he was with Lucie again, and she told him it was all a dream, and he had never gone away. A pause of forgetfulness, and then he had even suffered, and had come back to her, dead and at peace, and yet there was no difference in him. Another pause of oblivion, and he awoke in the sombre morning, unconscious where he was or what had happened, until it flashed upon his mind, "this is the day of my death!"

Thus, had he come through the hours, to the day when the fifty-two heads were to fall. And now, while he was composed, and hoped that he could meet the end with quiet heroism, a new action began in his waking thoughts, which was very difficult to master.

He had never seen the instrument that was to terminate his life. How high it was from the ground, how many steps it had, where he would be stood, how he would be touched, whether the touching hands would be dyed red, which way his face would be turned, whether he would be the first, or might be the last, these and many similar questions, in no wise directed by his will, obtruded themselves over and over again, countless times. Neither were they connected with fear: he was conscious of no fear. Rather, they originated in a strange besetting desire to know what to do

when the time came ; a desire gigantically disproportionate to the few swift moments to which it referred ; a wondering that was more like the wondering of some other spirit within his, than his own.

The hours went on as he walked to and fro, and the clocks struck the numbers he would never hear again. Nine gone for ever, ten gone for ever, eleven gone for ever, twelve coming on to pass away. After a hard contest with that eccentric action of thought which had last perplexed him, he had got the better of it. He walked up and down, softly repeating their names to himself. The worst of the strife was over. He could walk up and down, free from distracting fancies, praying for himself and for them.

Twelve gone for ever.

He had been apprised that the final hour was Three, and he knew he would be summoned some time earlier, inasmuch as the tumbrils jolted heavily and slowly through the streets. Therefore, he resolved to keep Two before his mind, as the hour, and so to strengthen himself in the interval that he might be able, after that time, to strengthen others.

Walking regularly to and fro with his arms folded on his breast, a very different man from the prisoner who had walked to and fro at La Force, he heard One struck away from him, without surprise. The hour had measured like most other hours. Devoutly thankful to Heaven for his recovered self-possession, he thought, "There is but another now," and turned to walk again.

Footsteps in the stone passage, outside the door. He stopped.

The key was put in the lock, and turned. Before the door was opened, or as it opened, a man said in a low voice, in English : "He has never seen me here ; I have kept out of his way. Go you in alone ; I wait near. Lose no time !"

The door was quickly opened and closed, and there stood before him, face to face, quiet, intent upon him, with the light of a smile on his features and a cautionary finger on his lip, Sydney Carton.

There was something so bright and remarkable in his look, that, for the first moment, the prisoner misdoubted him to be an apparition of his own imagining. But, he spoke, and it was his voice ; he took the prisoner's hand, and it was his real grasp.

"Of all the people upon earth, you least expected to see me ?" he said.

"I could not believe it to be you. I can scarcely believe it now. You are not"—the apprehension came suddenly into his mind—"a prisoner ?"

"No. I am accidentally possessed of a power over one

of the keepers here, and in virtue of it I stand before you. I come from her—your wife, dear Darnay.”

The prisoner wrung his hand.

“I bring you a request from her.”

“What is it?”

“A most earnest, pressing, and emphatic entreaty, addressed to you in the most pathetic tones of the voice so dear to you, that you well remember.”

The prisoner turned his face partly aside.

“You have no time to ask me why I bring it, or what it means; I have no time to tell you. You must comply with it—take off those boots you wear, and draw on these of mine.”

There was a chair against the wall of the cell, behind the prisoner. Carton, pressing forward, had already, with the speed of lightning, got him down into it, and stood over him barefoot.

“Draw on these boots of mine. Put your hands to them; put your will to them. Quick!”

“Carton, there is no escaping from this place; it never can be done. You will only die with me. It is madness.”

“It would be madness if I asked you to escape; but do I? When I ask you to pass out at that door, tell me it is madness and remain here. Change that cravat for this of mine, that coat for this of mine. While you do it, let me take this ribbon from your hair, and shake out your hair like this of mine!”

With wonderful quickness, and with a strength both of will and action, that appeared quite supernatural, he forced all these changes upon him. The prisoner was like a young child in his hands.

“Carton! Dear Carton! It is madness. It cannot be accomplished, it never can be done, it has been attempted, and has always failed. I implore you not to add your death to the bitterness of mine.”

“Do I ask you, my dear Darnay, to pass the door? When I ask that, refuse. There are pen and ink and paper on this table. Is your hand steady enough to write?”

“It was, when you came in.”

“Steady it again, and write what I shall dictate. Quick, friend, quick!”

Pressing his hand to his bewildered head, Darnay sat down at the table. Carton, with his right hand in his breast, stood close beside him.

“Write exactly as I speak.”

“To whom do I address it?”

“To no one.” Carton still had his hand in his breast.

“Do I date it?”

“No.”

The prisoner looked up, at each question. Carton, standing over him with his hand in his breast, looked down.

“‘If you remember,’” said Carton, dictating, “‘the words that passed between us, long ago, you will readily comprehend this when you see it. You do remember them, I know. It is not in your nature to forget them.’”

He was drawing his hand from his breast; the prisoner chancing to look up in his hurried wonder as he wrote, the hand stopped, closing upon something.

“Have you written ‘forget them?’” Carton asked.

“I have. Is that a weapon in your hand?”

“No; I am not armed.”

“What is it in your hand?”

“You shall know directly. Write on; there are but a few words more.” He dictated again. “‘I am thankful that the time has come, when I can prove them. That I do so, is no subject for regret or grief.’” As he said these words with his eyes fixed on the writer, his hand slowly and softly moved down close to the writer’s face.

The pen dropped from Darnay’s fingers on the table, and he looked about him vacantly.

“What vapour is that?” he asked.

“Vapour?”

“Something that crossed me?”

“I am conscious of nothing; there can be nothing here. Take up the pen and finish. Hurry, hurry!”

As if his memory were impaired, or his faculties disordered, the prisoner made an effort to rally his attention. As he looked at Carton with clouded eyes and with an altered manner of breathing, Carton—his hand again in his breast—looked steadily at him.

“Hurry, hurry!”

The prisoner bent over the paper, once more.

“‘If it had been otherwise;’” Carton’s hand was again watchfully and softly stealing down; “‘I never should have used the longer opportunity. If it had been otherwise;’” the hand was at the prisoner’s face; “‘I should but have had so much the more to answer for. If it had been otherwise—’” Carton looked at the pen, and saw that it was trailing off into unintelligible signs.

Carton’s hand moved back to his breast no more. The prisoner sprang up, with a reproachful look, but Carton’s hand was close and firm at his nostrils, and Carton’s left arm caught him round the waist. For a few seconds he faintly struggled with the man who had come to lay down his life for him; but, within a minute or so, he was stretched insensible on the ground.

Quickly, but with hands as true to the purpose as his heart was, Carton dressed himself in the clothes the pris-

oner had laid aside, combed back his hair, and tied it with the ribbon the prisoner had worn. Then, he softly called "Enter there! Come in!" and the spy presented himself.

"You see?" said Carton, looking up, as he kneeled on one knee beside the insensible figure, putting the paper in the breast: "Is your hazard very great?"

"Mr. Carton," the spy answered, with a timid snap of his fingers, "my hazard is not *that*, in the thickcross of business here, if you are true to the whole of your bargain."

"Don't fear me. I will be true to the death."

"You must be, Mr. Carton, if the tale of fifty-two is to be right. Being made right by you in that dress, I shall have no fear."

"Have no fear! I shall soon be out of the way of harming you, and the rest will soon be far from here, please God! Now, get assistance and take me to the coach."

"You?" said the spy, nervously.

"Him, man, with whom I have exchanged. You go out at the gate by which you brought me in?"

"Of course."

"I was weak and faint when you brought me in, and I am fainter now you take me out. The parting interview has overpowered me. Such a thing has happened here, often, and too often. Your life is in your own hands. Quick! Call assistance!"

"You swear not to betray me?" said the trembling spy, as he paused for a last moment.

"Man, man!" returned Carton, stamping his foot; "have I sworn by no solemn vow already, to go through with this, that you waste the precious moments now? Take him yourself to the court-yard you know of, place him yourself in the carriage, show him yourself to Mr. Lorry, tell him yourself to give him no restorative but air, and to remember my words of last night, and his promise of last night, and drive away!"

The spy withdrew, and Carton seated himself at the table, resting his forehead on his hands. The spy returned immediately, with two men.

"How, then?" said one of them, contemplating the fallen figure. "So afflicted to find that his friend has drawn a prize in the lottery of Sainte Guillotine?"

"A good patriot," said the other, "could hardly have been more afflicted if the Aristocrat had drawn a blank."

They raised the unconscious figure, placed it on a litter they had brought to the door, and bent to carry it away.

“The time is short, Evrémonde,” said the spy, in a warning voice.

“I know it well,” answered Carton. “Be careful of my friend, I entreat you, and leave me.”

“Come, then, my children,” said Barsad. “Lift him, and come away!”

The door closed, and Carton was left alone. Straining his powers of listening to the utmost, he listened for any sound that might denote suspicion or alarm. There was none. Keys turned, doors clashed, footsteps passed through long distant passages: no cry was raised, or hurry made, that seemed unusual. Breathing more freely in a little while, he sat down at the table, and listened again until the clock struck Two.

Sounds that he was not afraid of, for he divined their meaning, then began to be audible. Several doors were opened in succession, and finally his own. A gaoler, with a list in his hand, looked in, merely saying, “Follow me, Evrémonde!” and he followed into a large dark room, at a distance. It was a dark winter day, and what with the shadows within, and what with the shadows without, he could but dimly discern the others who were brought there to have their arms bound. Some were standing; some seated. Some were lamenting, and in restless motion; but, these were few. The great majority were silent and still, looking fixedly at the ground.

As he stood by the wall in a dim corner, while some of the fifty-two were brought in after him, one man stopped in passing, to embrace him, as having a knowledge of him. It thrilled him with a great dread of discovery; but the man went on. A very few moments after that, a young woman, with a slight girlish form, a sweet spare face in which there was no vestige of colour, and large widely opened patient eyes, rose from the seat where he had observed her sitting, and came to speak to him

“Citizen Evrémonde,” she said, touching him with her cold hand. “I am a poor little seamstress, who was with you in La Force.”

He murmured for answer: “True. I forget what you were accused of?”

“Plots. Though the just Heaven knows I am innocent of any. Is it likely? Who would think of plotting with a poor little weak creature like me?”

The forlorn smile with which she said it, so touched him that tears started from his eyes.

“I am not afraid to die, Citizen Evrémonde, but I have done nothing. I am not unwilling to die, if the Republic which is to do so much good to us poor, will profit by my death; but I do not know how that can

be, Citizen Evrémonde. Such a poor weak little creature !”

As the last thing on earth that his heart was to warm and soften to, it warmed and softened to this pitiable girl.

“ I heard you were released, Citizen Evrémonde. I hoped it was true ?”

“ It was. But, I was again taken and condemned.”

“ If I may ride with you, Citizen Evrémonde, will you let me hold your hand ? I am not afraid, but I am little and weak, and it will give me more courage.”

As the patient eyes were lifted to his face, he saw a sudden doubt in them, and then astonishment. He pressed the work-worn, hunger-worn, young fingers, and touched his lips.

“ Are you dying for him ?” she whispered.

“ And his wife and child. Hush ! Yes.”

“ Oh you will let me hold your brave hand, stranger ?”

“ Hush ! Yes, my poor sister ; to the last.”

The same shadows that are falling on the prison, are falling, in the same hour of that early afternoon, on the Barrier with the crowd about it, when a coach going out of Paris drives up to be examined.

“ Who goes here ? Whom have we within ? Papers !”

The papers are handed out and read.

“ Alexandre Manette. Physician. French. Which is he ?”

This is he ; this helpless, inarticulately murmuring, wandering old man pointed out.

“ Apparently the Citizen-Doctor is not in his right mind ? The Revolution-fever will have been too much for him.”

Greatly too much for him.

“ Hah ! Many suffer with it. Lucie. His daughter French. Which is she ?”

This is she.

“ Apparently it must be. Lucie, the wife of Evrémonde ; is it not ?”

It is.

“ Hah ! Evrémonde has an assignation elsewhere. Lucie, her child. English. This is she ?”

She and no other.

“ Kiss me, child of Evrémonde. Now, thou hast kissed a good Republican ; something new in thy family ; remember it ! Sydney Carton. Advocate. English. Which is he ?”

He lies here, in this corner of the carriage. He, too, is pointed out.

“ Apparently the English advocate is in a swoon ?”

It is hoped he will recover in the fresher air. It is

represented that he is not in strong health, and has separated sadly from a friend who is under the displeasure of the Republic.

"Is that all? It is not a great deal, that! Many are under the displeasure of the Republic, and must look out at the little window. Jarvis Lorry. Banker. English. Which is he?"

"I am he. Necessarily, being the last."

It is Jarvis Lorry who has replied to all the previous questions. It is Jarvis Lorry who has alighted and stands with his hand on the coach door, replying to a group of officials. They leisurely walk round the carriage and leisurely mount the box, to look at what little luggage it carries on the roof; the country-people hanging about, press nearer to the coach doors and greedily stare in; a little child, carried by its mother, has its short arm held out for it, that it may touch the wife of an aristocrat who has gone to the Guillotine.

"Behold your papers, Jarvis Lorry, countersigned."

"One can depart, citizen?"

"One can depart. Forward, my postilions! A good journey!"

"I salute you, citizens.—And the first danger passed!"

These are again the words of Jarvis Lorry, as he clasps his hands and looks upward. There is terror in the carriage, there is weeping, there is the heavy breathing of the insensible traveller.

"Are we not going too slowly? Can they not be induced to go faster?" asks Lucie, clinging to the old man.

"It would seem like flight, my darling. I must not urge them too much; it would rouse suspicion."

"Look back, look back, and see if we are pursued!"

"The road is clear, my dearest. So far, we are not pursued."

Houses in twos and threes pass by us, solitary farms, ruinous buildings, dye-works, tanneries and the like, open country, avenues of leafless trees. The hard uneven pavement is under us, the soft deep mud is on either side. Sometimes, we strike into the skirting mud, to avoid the stones that clatter us and shake us; sometimes, we stick in ruts and sloughs there. The agony of our impatience is then so great, that in our wild alarm and hurry we are for getting out and running—hiding—doing anything but stopping.

Out of the open country, in again among ruinous buildings, solitary farms, dye-works tanneries and the like, cottages in twos and threes, avenues of leafless trees. Have these men deceived us, and taken us back by another road? Is not this the same place twice over? Thank Heaven no. A village. Look back, look back, and see if we are pursued! Hush! the posting-house.

Leisurely, our four horses are taken out ; leisurely, the coach stands in the little street, bereft of horses, and with no likelihood upon it of ever moving again ; leisurely, the new horses come into visible existence, one by one ; leisurely, the new postilions follow, sucking and plaiting the lashes of their whips ; leisurely, the old postilions count their money, make wrong additions, and arrive at dissatisfied results. All the time, our over-fraught hearts are beating at a rate that would far outstrip the fastest gallop of the fastest horses ever foaled.

At length the new postilions are in their saddles, and the old are left behind. We are through the village, up the hill, and down the hill, and on the low watery grounds. Suddenly, the postilions exchange speech with animated gesticulation, and the horses are pulled up, almost on their haunches. We are pursued !

“ Ho ! Within the carriage there. Speak then ! ”

“ What is it ? ” asks Mr. Lorry, looking out at window.

“ How many did they say ? ”

“ I do not understand you. ”

“ —At the last post. How many to the Guillotine to-day ? ”

“ Fifty-two. ”

“ I said so ! A brave number ! My fellow-citizen here, would have it forty-two ; ten more heads are worth having. The Guillotine goes handsomely. I love it. Hi forward. Whoop ! ”

The night comes on dark. He moves more ; he is beginning to revive, and to speak intelligibly ; he thinks they are still together ; he asks him, by his name, what he has in his hand. O pity us, kind Heaven and help us ! Look out, look out, and see if we are pursued.

The wind is rushing after us, and the clouds are flying after us, and the moon is plunging after us, and the whole wild night is in pursuit of us ; but, so far, we are pursued by nothing else.

CHAPTER XIV

The Knitting Done.

IN that same juncture of time when the Fifty-Two awaited their fate, Madame Defarge held darkly ominous council with The Vengeance and Jacques Three of the Revolutionary Jury. Not in the wine-shop did Madame Defarge confer with these ministers, but in the shed of the wood-sawyer, erst a mender of roads. The sawyer himself did not participate in the conference, but

abided at a little distance, like an outer satellite who was not to speak until required, or to offer an opinion until invited.

“But our Defarge,” said Jacques Three, “is undoubtedly a good Republican? Eh?”

“There is no better,” the voluble Vengeance protested in her shrill notes, “in France.”

“Peace, little Vengeance,” said Madame Defarge, laying her hand with a slight frown on her lieutenant’s lips, “hear me speak. My husband, fellow-citizen, is a good Republican and a bold man; he has deserved well of the Republic, and possesses its confidence. But my husband has his weaknesses, and he is so weak as to relent towards this Doctor.”

“It is a great pity,” croaked Jacques Three, dubiously shaking his head, with his cruel fingers at his hungry mouth: “it is not quite like a good citizen; it is a thing to regret.”

“See you,” said madame, “I care nothing for this Doctor, I. He may wear his head or lose it, for any interest I have in him; it is all one to me. But, the Evrémonts are to be exterminated, and the wife and child must follow the husband and father.”

“She has a fine head for it,” croaked Jacques Three. “I have seen blue eyes and golden hair there, and they looked charming when Sanson held them up.” Ogre that he was, he spoke like an epicure.

Madame Defarge cast down her eyes, and reflected a little.

“The child also,” observed Jacques Three, with a meditative enjoyment of his words, “has golden hair and blue eyes. And we seldom have a child there. It is a pretty sight!”

“In a word,” said Madame Defarge, coming out of her short abstraction, “I cannot trust my husband in this matter. Not only do I feel, since last night, that I dare not confide to him the details of my projects; but also I feel that if I delay, there is danger of his giving warning, and then they might escape.”

“That must never be,” croaked Jacques Three; “no one must escape. We have not half enough as it is. We ought to have six score a day.”

“In a word,” Madame Defarge went on, “my husband has not my reason for pursuing this family to annihilation, and I have not his reason for regarding this Doctor with any sensibility. I must act for myself, therefore. Come hither, little citizen.”

The wood-sawyer, who held her in the respect, and himself in the submission, of mortal fear, advanced with his hand to his red cap.

“Touching those signals, little citizen,” said Madame

Defarge, sternly, "that she made to the prisoners; you are ready to bear witness to them this very day?"

"Ay, ay, why not!" cried the sawyer. "Every day, in all weathers, from two to four, always signalling, sometimes with the little one, sometimes without. I know what I know. I have seen with my eyes."

He made all manner of gestures while he spoke, as if in incidental imitation of some few of the great diversity of signals that he had never seen.

"Clearly plots," said Jacques Three. "Transparently!"

"There is no doubt of the Jury?" inquired Madame Defarge, letting her eyes turn to him with a gloomy smile.

"Rely upon the patriotic Jury, dear citizeness. I answer for my fellow-Jurymen."

"Now, let me see," said Madame Defarge, pondering again. "Yet once more! Can I spare this Doctor to my husband? I have no feeling either way. Can I spare him?"

"He would count as one head," observed Jacques Three, in a low voice. "We really have not heads enough; it would be a pity, I think."

"He was signalling with her when I saw her," argued Madame Defarge; "I cannot speak of one without the other; and I must not be silent, and trust the case wholly to him, this little citizen here. For, I am not a bad witness."

The Vengeance and Jacques Three vied with each other in their fervent protestations that she was the most admirable and marvellous of witnesses. The little citizen, not to be outdone, declared her to be a celestial witness.

"He must take his chance," said Madame Defarge. "No, I cannot spare him! You are engaged at three o'clock; you are going to see the batch of to-day executed.—You?"

The question was addressed to the wood-sawyer, who hurriedly replied in the affirmative: seizing the occasion to add that he was the most ardent of Republicans, and that he would be in effect the most desolate of Republicans, if anything prevented him from enjoying the pleasure of smoking his afternoon pipe in the contemplation of the droll national barbar. He was so very demonstrative herein, that he might have been suspected (perhaps was, by the dark eyes that looked contemptuously at him out of Madame Defarge's head) of having his small individual fears for his own personal safety, every hour in the day.

"I," said madame, "am equally engaged at the same place. After it is over—say at eight to-night—come you

to me, in Saint Antoine, and we will give information against the people at my Section."

The wood-sawyer said he would be proud and flattered to attend the citizeness. The citizeness looking at him, he became embarrassed, evaded her glance as a small dog would have done, retreated among his wood, and hid his confusion over the handle of his saw.

Madame Defarge beckoned the Jurymen and The Vengeance a little nearer to the door, and there expounded her further views to them thus :

"She will now be at home, awaiting the moment of his death. She will be mourning and grieving. She will be in a state of mind to impeach the justice of the Republic. She will be full of sympathy with its enemies. I will go to her."

"What an admirable woman ; what an adorable woman !" exclaimed Jacques Three, rapturously. "Ah, my cherished !" cried The Vengeance ; and embraced her.

"Take you my knitting," said Madame Defarge, placing it in her lieutenant's hands, "and have it ready for me in my usual seat. Keep me my usual chair. Go you there straight, for there will probably be a greater concourse than usual, to-day."

"I willingly obey the orders of my Chief," said The Vengeance, with alacrity, and kissing her cheek. "You will not be late?"

"I shall be there before the commencement."

"And before the tumbrils arrive. Be sure you are there, my soul," said The Vengeance, calling after her, for she had already turned into the street, "before the tumbrils arrive !"

Madame Defarge slightly waved her hand, to imply that she heard, and might be relied upon to arrive in good time, and so went through the mud, and round the corner of the prison wall. The Vengeance and the Jurymen, looking after her as she walked away, were highly appreciative of her fine figure, and her superb moral endowments.

There were many women at that time, upon whom the time laid a dreadfully disfiguring hand ; but, there was not one among them more to be dreaded than this ruthless woman, now taking her way along the streets. Of a strong and fearless character, of shrewd sense and readiness, of great determination, of that kind of beauty which not only seems to impart to its possessor firmness and animosity, but to strike into others an instinctive recognition of those qualities ; the troubled time would have heaved her up, under any circumstances. But, imbued from her childhood with a brooding sense of wrong, and an inveterate hatred of a class, opportunity

had developed her into a tigress. She was absolutely without pity. If she had ever had the virtue in her, it had quite gone out of her.

(It was nothing to her, that an innocent man was to die for the sins of his forefathers; she saw, not him, but them. It was nothing to her, that his wife was to be made a widow and his daughter an orphan; that was insufficient punishment, because they were her natural enemies and her prey, and as such had no right to live. To appeal to her, was made hopeless by her having no sense of pity, even for herself. If she had been laid low in the streets, in any of the many encounters in which she had been engaged, she would not have pitied herself; nor, if she had been ordered to the axe to-morrow, would she have gone to it with any softer feeling than a fierce desire to change places with the man who sent her there.

Such a heart Madame Defarge carried under her rough robe. Carelessly worn, it was a becoming robe enough, in a certain weird way, and her dark hair looked rich under her coarse red cap. Lying hidden in her bosom, was a loaded pistol. Lying hidden at her waist, was a sharpened dagger. Thus accoutred, and walking with the confident tread of such a character, and with the supple freedom of a woman who had habitually walked in her girlhood, bare-foot and bare-legged, on the brown sea-sand, Madame Defarge took her way along the streets.

Now, when the journey of the travelling coach, at that very moment waiting for the completion of its load, had been planned out last night, the difficulty of taking Miss Pross in it had much engaged Mr. Lorry's attention. It was not merely desirable to avoid overloading the coach, but it was of the highest importance that the time occupied in examining it and its passengers, should be reduced to the utmost; since their escape might depend on saving of only a few seconds here and there. Finally, he had proposed, after anxious consideration, that Miss Pross and Jerry, who were at liberty to leave the city, should leave it at three o'clock in the lightest-wheeled conveyance known to that period. Unencumbered with luggage, they would soon overtake the coach, and, passing it and preceding it on the road, would order its horses in advance, and greatly facilitate its progress during the precious hours of the night, when delay was the most to be dreaded.

Seeing in this arrangement the hope of rendering real service in that pressing emergency, Miss Pross hailed it with joy. She and Jerry had beheld the coach start, had known who it was that Solomon brought, had passed

some ten minutes in tortures of suspense, and were now concluding their arrangements to follow the coach, even as Madame Defarge, taking her way through the streets, now drew nearer and nearer to the else-deserted lodging in which they held their consultation.

“Now what do you think, Mr. Cruncher,” said Miss Pross, whose agitation was so great that she could hardly speak, or stand, or move, or live: “what do you think of our not starting from this court yard? Another carriage having already gone from here to-day, it might awaken suspicion.”

“My opinion, miss,” returned Mr. Cruncher, “is as you’re right. Likewise wot I’ll stand by you, right or wrong.”

“I am so distracted with fear and hope for our precious creatures,” said Miss Pross, wildly crying, “that I am incapable of forming any plan. Are *you* capable of forming any plan, my dear good Mr. Cruncher?”

“Respectin’ a future spear o’ life, miss,” returned Mr. Cruncher, “I hope so. Respectin’ any present use o’ this here blessed old head o’ mine, I think not. Would you do me the favour, miss, to take notice o’ two promises and wows wot it is my wishes fur to record in this here crisis?”

“Oh, for gracious sake!” cried Miss Pross, still wildly crying, “record them at once, and get them out of the way, like an excellent man.”

“First,” said Mr. Cruncher, who was all in a tremble, and who spoke with an ashy and solemn visage, “them poor things well out o’ this, never no more will I do it, never no more!”

“I am quite sure, Mr. Cruncher,” returned Miss Pross, “that you never will do it again, whatever it is, and I beg you not to think it necessary to mention more particularly what it is.”

“No, miss,” returned Jerry, “it shall not be named to you. Second: them poor things well out o’ this, and never no more will I interfere with Mrs. Cruncher’s flopping, never no more!”

“Whatever housekeeping arrangement that may be,” said Miss Pross, striving to dry her eyes and compose herself, “I have no doubt it is best that Mr. Cruncher should have it entirely under her own superintendence—O my poor darlings!”

“I go so far as to say, miss, moreover,” proceeded Mr. Cruncher, with a most alarming tendency to hold forth as from a pulpit—“and let my words be took down and took to Mrs. Cruncher through yourself—that wot my opinions respectin’ flopping has undergone a change, and that wot I only hope with all my heart as Mrs. Cruncher may be a flopping at the present time.”

"There, there, there! I hope she is, my dear man," cried the distracted Miss Pross, "and I hope she finds it answering her expectations."

"Forbid it," proceeded Mr. Cruncher, with additional solemnity, additional slowness, and additional tendency to hold forth and hold out, "as anything wot I have ever said or done should be wisited on my earnest wishes for them poor creeturs now! Forbid it as w shouldn't all flop (if it was anyways conwenient) to get 'em out o' this here dismal risk! Forbid it, miss! Wot I say, for—**BID** it!" This was Mr. Cruncher's conclusion after a protracted but vain endeavour to find a better one.

And still Madame Defarge pursuing her way along the streets, came nearer and nearer.

"If we ever get back to our native land," said Miss Pross, "you may rely upon my telling Mrs. Cruncher as much as I may be able to remember and understand of what you have so impressively said; and at all events you may be sure that I shall bear witness t your being thoroughly in earnest at this dreadful tim. Now, pray let us think! My esteemed Mr. Cruncher, let us think!"

Still, Madame Defarge, pursuing her way along the streets, came nearer and nearer.

"If you were to go before," said Miss Pross, "and stop the vehicle and horses from coming here, and were to wait somewhere for me; wouldn't that be best?"

Mr. Cruncher thought it might be best.

"Where could you wait for me?" asked Miss Pross.

Mr. Cruncher was so bewildered that he could think of no locality but Temple Bar. Alas, Temple Bar was hundreds of miles away, and Madame Defarge was drawing very near indeed.

"By the cathedral door," said Miss Pross. "Would it be much out of the way, to take me in, near the great cathedral door between the two towers?"

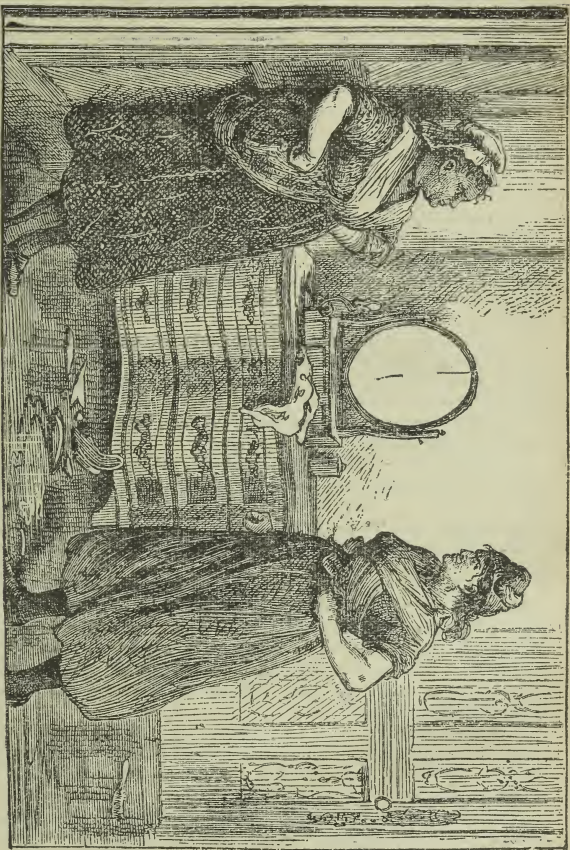
"No, miss," answered Mr. Cruncher.

"Then, like the best of men," said Miss Pross, "go to the posting-house straight, and make that change."

"I am doubtful," said Mr. Cruncher, hesitating and shaking his head, "about leaving of you, you see. We don't know what may happen."

"Heaven knows we don't," returned Miss Pross, "but have no fear for me. Take me in at the cathedral, at Three o'Clock or as near it as you can, and I am sure it will be better than our going from here. I feel certain of it. There! Bless you, Mr. Cruncher! Think—not of me, but of the lives that may depend on both of us!"

This exordium, and Miss Pross's two hands in quite agonised entreaty clasping his, decided Mr. Cruncher. With an encouraging nod or two, he immediately went



“ YOU MIGHT, FROM YOUR APPEARANCE, BE THE WIFE OF LUCIFER,” SAID MISS PROSS.

— A Tale of Two Cities, Vol. Eleven, page 325.

out to alter the arrangements, and left her by herself to follow as she had proposed.

The having originated a precaution which was already in course of execution, it was a great relief to Miss Pross. The necessity of composing her appearance so that it should attract no special notice in the streets, was another relief. She looked at her watch, and it was twenty minutes past two. She had no time to lose, but must get ready at once.

Afraid, in her extreme perturbation, of the loneliness of the deserted rooms, and of half-imagined faces peeping from behind every open door in them, Miss Pross got a basin of cold water and began laving her eyes, which were swollen and red. Haunted by her feverish apprehensions, she could not bear to have her sight obscured for a minute at a time by the dripping water, but constantly paused and looked round to see that there was no one watching her. In one of those pauses she recoiled and cried out, for she saw a figure standing in the room.

The basin fell to the ground broken, and the water flowed to the feet of Madame Defarge. By strange stern ways, and through much staining blood, those feet had come to meet that water.

Madame Defarge looked coldly at her, and said, "The wife of Evrémonde; where is she?"

It flashed upon Miss Pross's mind that the doors were all standing open, and would suggest the flight. Her first act was to shut them. There were four in the room, and she shut them all. She then placed herself before the door of the chamber which Lucie had occupied.

Madame Defarge's dark eyes followed her through this rapid movement, and rested on her when it was finished. Miss Pross had nothing beautiful about her; years had not tamed the wildness, or softened the grimness, of her appearance; but, she too was a determined woman in her different way, and she measured Madame Defarge with her eyes, every inch.

"You might, from your appearance, be the wife of Lucifer," said Miss Pross, in her breathing. "Nevertheless, you shall not get the better of me. I am an Englishwoman."

Madame Defarge looked at her scornfully, but still with something of Miss Pross's own perception that they two were at bay. She saw a tight, wiry woman before her, as Mr. Lorry had seen in the same figure a woman with a strong hand, in the years gone by. She knew full well that Miss Pross was the family's devoted friend; Miss Pross knew full well that Madame Defarge was the family's malevolent enemy.

"On my way yonder," said Madame Defarge, with a slight movement of her hand towards the fatal spot, "where they reserve my chair and my knitting for me. I am come to make any compliments to her in passing. I wish to see her."

"I know that your intentions are evil," said Miss Pross, "and you may depend upon it, I'll hold my own against them."

Each spoke in her own language; neither understood the other's words; both were very watchful, and intent to deduce from look and manner, what the unintelligible words meant.

"It will do her no good to keep herself concealed from me at this moment," said Madame Defarge. "Good patriots will know what that means. Let me see her. Go tell her that I wish to see her. Do you hear?"

"If those eyes of your's were bed-witches," returned Miss Pross, "and I was an English four-poster, they shouldn't lose a splinter of me. No, you wicked foreign woman; I am your match."

Madame Defarge was not likely to follow those idiomatic remarks in detail; but, she so far understood them as to perceive that she was set at naught.

"Woman imbecile and pig-like!" said Madame Defarge, frowning. "I take no answer from you. I demand to see her. Either tell her that I demand to see her, or stand out of the way of the door and let me go to her!" This, with an angry explanatory wave of the right arm.

"I little thought," said Miss Pross, "that I should ever want to understand your nonsensical language; but I would give all I have, except the clothes I wear, to know whether you suspect the truth, or any part of it."

Neither of them for a single moment released the other's eyes. Madame Defarge had not moved from the spot where she stood when Miss Pross first became aware of her; but, she now advanced one step.

"I am a Briton," said Miss Pross, "I am desperate. I don't care an English Twopence for myself. I know that the longer I keep you here, the greater hope there is for my Ladybird. I'll not leave a handful of that dark hair upon your head, if you lay a finger on me!"

Thus Miss Pross, with a shake of her head and a flash of her eyes between every rapid sentence, and every rapid sentence a whole breath. Thus Miss Pross, who had never struck a blow in her life.

But, her courage was of that emotional nature that it brought the irrepressible tears into her eyes. This was a courage that Madame Defarge so little comprehended as to mistake for weakness. "Ha, ha!" she laughed, "you poor wretch! What are you worth! I address

myself to that Doctor." Then she raised her voice and called out, "Citizen Doctor! Wife of Evrémonde! Child of Evrémonde! Any person but this miserable fool, answer the Citizeness Defarge!"

Perhaps the following silence, perhaps some latent disclosure in the expression of Miss Pross's face, perhaps a sudden misgiving apart from either suggestion, whispered to Madame Defarge that they were gone. Three of the doors she opened swiftly, and looked in.

"These rooms are all in disorder, there has been hurried packing, there are odds and ends upon the ground. There is no one in that room behind you! Let me look."

"Never!" said Miss Pross, who understood the request as perfectly as Madame Defarge understood the answer.

"If they are not in that room, they are gone, and can be pursued and brought back," said Madame Defarge to herself.

"As long as you don't know whether they are in that room or not, you are uncertain what to do," said Miss Pross to herself; "and you shall not know that, if I can prevent your knowing it; and know that, or not know that, you shall not leave here while I can hold you."

"I have been in the streets from the first, nothing has stopped me, I will tear you to pieces but I will have you from that door," said Madame Defarge.

"We are alone at the top of a high house in a solitary court-yard, we are not likely to be heard, and I pray for bodily strength to keep you here, while every minute you are here is worth a hundred thousand guineas to my darling," said Miss Pross.

Madame Defarge made at the door. Miss Pross, on the instinct of the moment, seized her round the waist in both her arms, and held her tight. It was in vain for Madame Defarge to struggle and to strike; Miss Pross, with the vigorous tenacity of love, always so much stronger than hate, clasped her tight, and even lifted her from the floor in the struggle that they had. The two hands of Madame Defarge buffeted and tore her face; but, Miss Pross, with her head down, held her round the waist, and clung to her with more than the hold of a drowning woman.

Soon, Madame Defarge's hands ceased to strike, and felt at her encircled waist. "It is under my arm," said Miss Pross, in smothered tones, "you shall not draw it. I am stronger than you, I bless Heaven for it. I'll hold you till one or other of us faints or dies!"

Madame Defarge's hands were at her bosom. Miss Pross looked up, saw what it was, struck at it, struck

out a flash and a crash, and stood alone—blinded with smoke.

All this was in a second. As the smoke cleared, leaving an awful stillness, it passed out on the air, like the soul of the furious woman whose body lay lifeless on the ground.

In the first fright and horror of her situation, Miss Pross passed the body as far from it as she could, and ran down the stairs to call for fruitless help. Happily, she bethought herself of the consequences of what she did, in time to check herself and go back. It was dreadful to go in at the door again; but, she did go in, and even went near it, to get the bonnet and other things that she must wear. These she put on, out on the staircase, first shutting and locking the door and taking away the key. She then sat down on the stairs a few moments, to breathe and to cry, and then got up and hurried away.

By good fortune she had a veil on her bonnet, or she could hardly have gone along the streets without being stopped. By good fortune, too, she was naturally so peculiar in appearance as not to show disfigurement like any other woman. She needed both advantages, for the marks of griping fingers were deep in her face, and her hair was torn, and her dress (hastily composed with unsteady hands) was clutched and dragged a hundred ways.

In crossing the bridge, she dropped the door key in the river. Arriving at the cathedral some few minutes before her escort, and waiting there, she thought, what if the key were already taken in a net, what if it were identified, what if the door were opened and the remains discovered, what if she were stopped at the gate, sent to prison, and charged with murder! In the midst of these fluttering thoughts, the escort appeared, took her in, and took her away.

“Is there any noise, in the streets?” she asked him.

“The usual noises,” Mr. Cruncher replied; and looked surprised by the question and by her aspect.

“I don’t hear you,” said Miss Pross. “What do you say?”

It was in vain for Mr. Cruncher to repeat what he said; Miss Pross could not hear him. “So I’ll nod my head,” thought Mr. Cruncher, amazed, “at all events she’ll see that.” And she did.

“Is there any noise in the streets now?” asked Miss Pross again, presently.

Again Mr. Cruncher nodded his head.

“I don’t hear it.”

“Gone deaf in an hour?” said Mr. Cruncher, ruminating, with his mind much disturbed; “wot’s come to her?”

"I feel," said Miss Pross, "as if there had been a flash and a crash, and that crash was the last thing I should ever hear in this life."

"Blest if she ain't in a queer condition!" said Mr. Cruncher, more and more disturbed. "Wot can she have been a takin', to keep her courage up? Hark! There's the roll of them dreadful carts! You can hear that, miss?"

"I can hear," said Miss Pross, seeing that he spoke to her, "nothing. O, my good man, there was first a great crash, and then a great stillness, and that stillness seems to be fixed and unchangeable, never to be broken any more as long as my life lasts."

"If she don't hear the roll of those dreadful carts, now very nigh their journey's end," said Mr. Cruncher, glancing over his shoulder, "it's my opinion that indeed she never will hear anything else in this world."

And indeed she never did.

CHAPTER XV.

The Footsteps Die out for Ever.

ALONG the Paris streets, the death-carts rumble, hollow and harsh. Six tumbrils carry the day's wine to La Guillotine. All the devouring and insatiate Monsters imagined since imagination could record itself, are fused in the one realisation, Guillotine. And yet there is not in France, with its rich variety of soil and climate, a blade, a leaf, a root, a sprig, a peppercorn, which will grow to maturity under conditions more certain than those that have produced this horror. Crush humanity out of shape once more, under similar hammers, and it will twist itself into the same tortured forms. Sow the same seed of rapacious licence and oppression ever again, and it will surely yield the same fruit according to its kind.

Six tumbrils roll along the streets. Change these back again to what they were, thou powerful enchanter, Time, and they shall be seen to be the carriages of absolute monarchs, the equipages of feudal nobles, the toilettes of flaring Jezabels, the churches that are not my father's house but dens of thieves, the huts of millions of starving peasants! No; the great magician who majestically works out the appointed order of the Creator, never reverses his transformations. "If thou be changed into this shape by the will of God," say the seers to the enchanted, in the wise Arabian stories, "then remain so! But, if thou wear this form through

mere passing conjuration, then resume thy former aspect!" Changeless and hopeless, the tumbrils roll along.

As the sombre wheels of the six carts go round, they seem to plow up a long crooked furrow among the populace in the streets. Ridges of faces are thrown to this side and to that, and the ploughs go steadily onward. So used are the regular inhabitants of the houses to the spectacle, that in many windows there are no people, and in some the occupations of the hands are not so much as suspended, while the eyes survey the faces in the tumbrils. Here and there, the inmate has visitors to see the sight; then he points his finger, with something of the complacency of a curator or authorised exponent, to this cart and to this, and seems to tell who sat here yesterday, and who there the day before.

Of the riders in the tumbrils, some observe these things, and all things on their last roadside, with an impassive stare; others, with a lingering interest in the ways of life and men. Some, seated with drooping heads, are sunk in silent despair; again, there are some so heedful of their looks that they cast upon the multitude such glances as they have seen in theatres, and in pictures. Several close their eyes, and think, or try to get their straying thoughts together. Only one, and he a miserable creature of a crazed aspect, is so shattered and made drunk by horror that he sings, and tries to dance. Not one of the whole number appeals, by look or gesture, to the pity of the people.

There is a guard of sundry horsemen riding abreast of the tumbrils, and faces are often turned up to some of them and they are asked some question. It would seem to be always the same question, for, it is always followed by a press of people towards the third cart. The horsemen abreast of that cart, frequently point out one man in it with their swords. The leading curiosity is, to know which is he; he stands at the back of the tumbril with his head bent down, to converse with a mere girl who sits on the side of the cart, and holds his hand. He has no curiosity or care for the scene about him, and always speaks to the girl. Here and there in a long Street of St. Honoré, cries are raised against him. If they moved him at all, it is only to a quiet smile, as he shakes his hair a little more loosely about his face. He cannot easily touch his face, his arms being bound.

On the steps of a church, awaiting the coming-up of the tumbrils, stands the spy and prison-sheep. He looks into the first of them: not there. He looks into the second: not there. He already asks himself, "Has he sacrificed me?" when his face clears, as he looks into the third.

"Which is Evrémonde?" said a man behind him.

“That. At the back there.”

“With his hand in the girl’s?”

“Yes.”

The man cries, “Down, Evrémonde! To the Guillotine all aristocrats! Down, Evrémonde!”

“Hush, hush!” the spy entreats him, timidly,

“And why not, citizen?”

“He is going to pay the forfeit; it will be paid in five minutes more. Let him be at peace.”

But, the man continuing to exclaim, “Down, Evrémonde!” the face of Evrémonde is for a moment turned towards him. Evrémonde then sees the spy, and looks attentively at him, and goes his way.

The clocks are on the stroke of three, and the furrow ploughed among the populace is turning round, to come on into the place of execution, and end. The ridges thrown to this side and to that, now crumble in and close behind the last plough as it passes on, for all are following to the Guillotine. In front of it, seated in chairs as in a garden of public diversion, are a number of women, busily knitting. On one of the foremost chairs, stands The Vengeance, looking about for her friend.

“Thèrese!” she cries, in her shrill tones. “Who has seen her? Thèrese Defarge!”

“She never missed before,” says a knitting-woman of the sisterhood.

“No; nor will she miss now,” cries The Vengeance, petulantly. “Thèrese.”

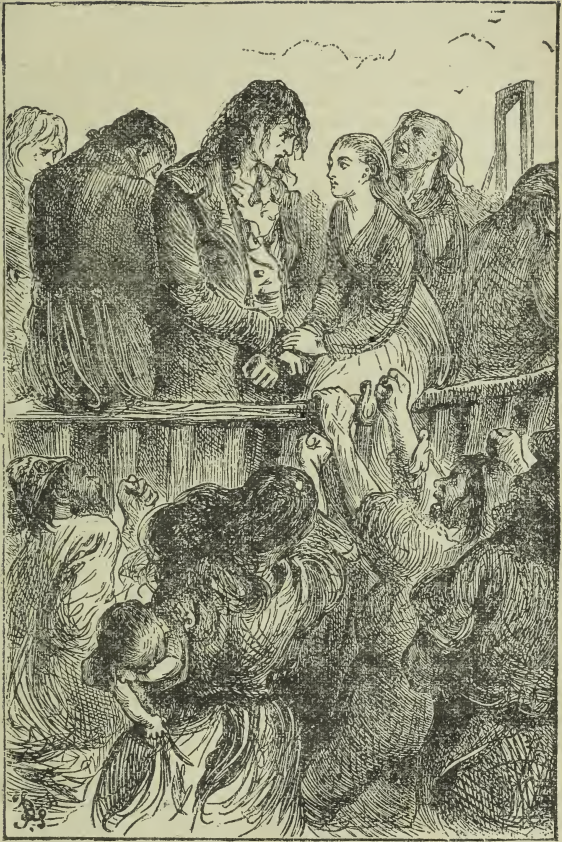
“Louder,” the woman recommends.

Ay! Louder, Vengeance, much louder, and still she will scarcely hear thee. Louder yet, Vengeance, with a little oath or so added, and yet it will hardly bring her. Send other women up and down to seek her, lingering somewhere; and yet, although the messengers have done dread deeds, it is questionable whether of their own wills they will go far enough to find her!

“Bad Fortune!” cries The Vengeance, stamping her foot in the chair, “and here are the tumbrils! And Evrémonde will be despatched in a wink, and she not here! See her knitting in my hand, and her empty chair ready for her. I cry with vexation and disappointment!”

As The Vengeance descends from her elevation to do it, the tumbrils begin to discharge their loads. The ministers of Sainte Guillotine are robed and ready. Crash!—a head is held up, and the knitting-women who scarcely lifted their eyes to look at it a moment ago when it could think and speak, count One.

The second tumbril empties and moves on; the third comes up. Crash!—And the knitting-women, never faltering or pausing in their work, count Two.



THE THIRD TUMBREI.

—A Tale of Two Cities, Vol. Eleven, page 333.

The supposed Evrémonde descends, and the seamstress is lifted out next after him. He has not relinquished her patient hand in getting out, but still holds it as he promised. He gently places her with her back to the crashing engine that constantly whirrs up and falls, and she looks into his face and thanks him.

"But for you, dear stranger, I should not be so composed, for I am naturally a poor little thing, faint of heart; nor should I have been able to raise my thoughts to Him who was put to death, that we might have hope and comfort here to-day. I think you were sent to me by Heaven."

"Or you to me," says Sydney Carton. "Keep your eyes upon me, dear child, and mind no other object."

"I mind nothing while I hold your hand. I shall mind nothing when I let it go, if they are rapid."

"They will be rapid. Fear not!"

The two stand in the fast-thinning throng of victims, but they speak as if they were alone. Eye to eye, voice to voice, hand to hand, heart to heart, these two children of the Universal Mother, else so wide apart and differing, have come together on the dark highway, to repair home together and to rest in her bosom.

"Brave and generous friend, will you let me ask you one last question? I am very ignorant, and it troubles me—just a little."

"Tell me what it is."

"I have a cousin, an only relative and an orphan, like myself, whom I love very dearly. She is five years younger than I, and she lives in a farmer's house in the south country. Poverty parted us, and she knows nothing of my fate—for I cannot write—and if I could, how should I tell her! It is better as it is."

"Yes, yes: better as it is."

"What I have been thinking as we came along, and what I am still thinking now, as I look into your kind strong face which gives me so much support, is this:—If the Republic really does good to the poor, and they come to be less hungry, and in all ways to suffer less, she may live a long time; she may even live to be old."

"What then, my gentle sister?"

"Do you think:" the uncomplaining eyes in which there is so much endurance, fill with tears, and the lips part a little more and tremble: "that it will seem long to me, while I wait for her in the better land where I trust both you and I will be mercifully sheltered?"

"It cannot be, my child; there is no Time there, and no trouble there."

"You comfort me so much! I am so ignorant. Am I to kiss you now? Is the moment come?"

"Yes."

She kisses his lips ; he kisses hers ; they solemnly bless each other. The spare hand does not tremble as he releases it ; nothing worse than a sweet, bright constancy is in the patient face. She goes next before him—is gone ; the knitting-women count Twenty Two.

“I am the Resurrection and the Life, saith the Lord : he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live : and whosoever liveth and believeth in me, shall never die.”

The murmuring of many voices, the upturning of many faces, the pressing on of many footsteps in the outskirts of the crowd, so that it swells forward in a mass, like one great heave of water, all flashes away. Twenty-Three.

They said of him, about the city that night, that it was the peacefullest man's face ever beheld there. Many added that he looked sublime and prophetic.

One of the most remarkable sufferers by the same axe—a woman—had asked at the foot of the same scaffold, not long before, to be allowed to write down the thoughts that were inspiring her. If he had given any utterance to his, and they were prophetic, they would have been these :

“I see Barsad, and Cly, Defarge, The Vengeance, the Juryman, the Judge, long ranks of the new oppressors who have risen on the destruction of the old, perishing by this retributive instrument, before it shall cease out of its present use. I see a beautiful city and a brilliant people rising from this abyss, and, in their struggles to be truly free, in their triumphs and defeats, through long long years to come, I see the evil of this time and of the previous time of which this is the natural birth, gradually making expiation for itself and wearing out.

“I see the lives for which I lay down my life, peaceful, useful, prosperous and happy, in that England which I shall see no more. I see Her with a child upon her bosom, who bears my name. I see her father, aged and bent, but otherwise restored, and faithful to all men in his healing office, and at peace. I see the good old man, so long their friend, in ten year's time enriching them with all he has, and passing tranquilly to his reward.

“I see that I hold a sanctuary in their hearts, and in the hearts of their descendants, generations hence. I see her, an old woman, weeping for me on the anniversary of this day. I see her and her husband, their course done, lying side by side in their last earthly bed, and I know that each was not more honoured and held sacred in the other's soul, than I was in the souls of both.

“I see that child who lay upon her bosom and who bore my name, a man, winning his way up in that path of life which once was mine. I see him winning it so well, that my name is made illustrious there by the light of his. I see the blots I threw upon it, faded away. I see him, foremost of just judges and honoured men, bringing a boy of my name, with a forehead that I know and golden hair, to this place—then fair to look upon, with not a trace of this day’s disfigurement—and I hear him tell the child my story, with a tender and a faltering voice.

“It is a far, far better thing that I do, than I have ever done ; it is a far, far better rest that I go to, than I have ever known.”

END OF “A TALE OF TWO CITIES.

DOMBEY AND SON.

PREFACE.

I MAKE so bold as to believe that the faculty (or the habit) of closely and carefully observing the character of men, is a rare one. I have not even found, within my experience, that the faculty (or the habit) of closely and carefully observing so much as the faces of men, is a general one by any means. The two commonest mistakes in judgment that I suppose to arise from the former default, are, the confounding of shyness with arrogance, and the not understanding that an obstinate nature exists in a perpetual struggle with itself.

Mr. Dombey undergoes no violent internal change, either in this book, or in life. A sense of his injustice is within him all along. The more he represses it, the more unjust he necessarily is. Internal shame and external circumstances may bring the contest to the surface in a week, or a day; but, it has been a contest for years, and is only fought out after a long balance of victory.

Years have elapsed since I dismissed Mr. Dombey. I have not been impatient to offer this critical remark upon him, and I offer it with some confidence.

I began this book by the lake of Geneva, and went on with it for some months in France. The association between the writing and the place of writing is so curiously strong in my mind, that at this day, although I know every stair in the little Midshipman's house, and could swear to every pew in the church in which Florence was married, or to every young gentleman's bedstead in Doctor Blimber's establishment, I yet confusedly imagine Captain Cuttle as secluding himself from Mrs. MacStinger among the mountains of Switzerland. Similarly, when I am reminded by any chance of what it was that the waves were always saying, I wander in my fancy for a whole night about the streets of Paris—as I really did, with a heavy heart, on the night when my little friend and I parted company for ever.

CHAPTER I.

Dombey and Son.

DOMBEY sat in the corner of the darkened room in the great arm-chair by the bedside, and Son lay tucked up warm in a little basket bedstead, carefully disposed on a low settee immediately in front of the fire and close to it, as if his constitution were analogous to that of a muffin, and it was essential to toast him brown while he was very new.

Dombey was about eight-and-forty years of age. Son about eight-and-forty minutes. Dombey was rather bald, rather red, and though a handsome well-made man, too stern and pompous in appearance, to be prepossessing. Son was very bald, and very red, and though (of course) an undeniably fine infant, somewhat crushed and spotty in his general effect as yet. On the brow of Dombey, Time and his brother Care had set some marks, as on a tree that was to come down in good time—remorseless twins they are for striding through their human forests, notching as they go—while the countenance of Son was crossed and re-crossed with a thousand little creases, which the same deceitful Time would take delight in smoothing out and wearing away with the flat part of his scythe, as a preparation of the surface for his deeper operations.

Dombey, exulting in the long-looked-for event, jingled and jingled the heavy gold watch-chain that depended from below his trim blue coat, whereof the buttons sparkled phosphorescently in the feeble rays of the distant fire. Son, with his little fists curled up and clenched, seemed, in his feeble way, to be squaring at existence for having come upon him so unexpectedly.

“The house will once again, Mrs. Dombey,” said Mr. Dombey, “be not only in name but in fact Dombey and Son; Dom-bey and Son!”

The words had such a softening influence, that he appended a term of endearment to Mrs. Dombey’s name (though not without some hesitation, as being a man but little used to that form of address): and said, “Mrs. Dombey, my—my dear.”

A transient flush of faint surprise, overspread the sick lady’s face as she raised her eyes towards him.

“He will be christened Paul, my—Mrs. Dombey—of course.”

She feebly echoed, “Of course,” or rather expressed it by the motion of her lips, and closed her eyes again.

“His father’s name, Mrs. Dombey, and his grand-

father's! I wish his grandfather were alive this day!" And again he said "Dom-bey and Son," in exactly the same tone as before.

Those three words conveyed the one idea of Mr. Dombey's life. The earth was made for Dombey and Son to trade in, and the sun and moon were made to give them light. Rivers and seas were formed to float their ships; rainbows gave them promise of fair weather; winds blew for or against their enterprises; stars and planets circled in their orbits, to preserve inviolate a system of which they were the centre. Common abbreviations took new meanings in his eyes, and had sole reference to them. A. D. had no concern with anno Domini, but sood for anno Dombey—and Son.

He had risen, as his father had before him, in the course of life and death, from Son to Dombey, and for nearly twenty years had been the sole representative of the firm. Of those years he had been married, ten—married, as some said, to a lady with no heart to give him; whose happiness, was in the past, and who was content to bind her broken spirit to the dutiful and meek endurance of the present. Such idle talk was little likely to reach the ears of Mr. Dombey, whom it nearly concerned; and probably no one in the world would have received it with such utter incredulity as he, if it had reached him. Dombey and Son had often dealt in hides, but never in hearts. They left that fancy ware to boys and girls, and boarding-schools and books. Mr. Dombey would have reasoned: That a matrimonial alliance with himself *must*, in the nature of things, be gratifying and honourable to any woman of common sense. That the hope of giving birth to a new partner in such a house, could not fail to awaken a glorious and stirring ambition in the breast of the least ambitious of her sex. That Mrs. Dombey had entered on that social contract of matrimony: almost necessarily part of a genteel and wealthy station, even without reference to the perpetuation of family firms: with her eyes fully open to these advantages. That Mrs. Dombey had had daily practical knowledge of his position in society. That Mrs. Dombey had always sat at the head of his table, and done the honours of his house in a remarkably lady-like and becoming manner. That Mrs. Dombey must have been happy. That she couldn't help it.

Or, at all events, with one drawback. Yes. That he would have allowed. With only one; but that one certainly involving much. They had been married ten years, and until this present day on which Mr. Dombey sat jingling and jingling his heavy gold watch-chain in the great arm-chair by the side of the bed, had had no issue.

—To speak of; none worth mentioning. There had been a girl some six years before, and the child, who had stolen into the chamber unobserved, was now crouching timidly, in a corner whence she could see her mother's face. But what was a girl to Dombey and Son! In the capital of the House's name and dignity, such a child was merely a piece of base coin that couldn't be invested—a bad boy—nothing more.

Mr. Dombey's cup of satisfaction was so full at this moment, however, that he felt he could afford a drop or two of its contents, even to sprinkle on the dust in the by-path of his little daughter.

So he said, "Florence, you may go and look at your pretty brother, if you like, I dare say. Don't touch him!"

The child glanced keenly at the blue coat and stiff white cravat, which, with a pair of creaking boots and a very loud-ticking watch, embodied her idea of a father; but her eyes returned to her mother's face immediately, and she neither moved nor answered.

Next moment, the lady had opened her eyes and seen the child; and the child had run towards her; and, standing on tiptoe, the better to hide her face in her embrace, had clung about her with a desperate affection very much at variance with her years.

"Oh Lord bless me!" said Mr. Dombey, rising testily. "A very ill-advised and feverish proceeding this, I am sure. I had better ask Dr. Peps if he'll have the goodness to step up-stairs again perhaps. I'll go down. I'll go down. I needn't beg you," he added, pausing for a moment at the settee before the fire, "to take particular care of this young gentleman, Mrs. —"

"Blockitt, sir?" suggested the nurse, a simpering piece of faded gentility, who did not presume to state her name as a fact, but merely offered it as a mild suggestion.

"Of this young gentleman, Mrs. Blockitt."

"No sir, indeed. I remember when Miss Florence was born—"

"Ay, ay, ay," said Mr. Dombey, bending over the basket bedstead, and slightly bending his brows at the same time. "Miss Florence was all very well, but this is another matter. This young gentleman has to accomplish a destiny. A destiny, little fellow!" As he thus apostrophised the infant he raised one of his hands to his lips, and kissed it; then, seeming to fear that the action involved some compromise of his dignity, went, awkwardly enough, away.

Doctor Parker Peps, one of the court physicians, and a man of immense reputation for assisting at the increase

of great families, was walking up and down the drawing-room with his hands behind him, to the unspeakable admiration of the family surgeon, who had regularly puffed the case for the last six weeks, among all his patients, friends, and acquaintances, as one to which he was in hourly expectation day and night of being summoned, in conjunction with Doctor Parker Peps.

“Well sir,” said Doctor Parker Peps in a round, deep, sonorous voice, muffled for the occasion, like the knocker; “do you find that your dear lady is at all roused by your visit?”

“Stimulated as it were?” said the family practitioner faintly: bowing at the same time to the doctor, as much as to say “Excuse my putting in a word, but this is a valuable connexion.”

Mr. Dombey was quite discomfited by the question. He had thought so little of the patient, that he was not in a condition to answer it. He said that it would be a satisfaction to him, if Doctor Parker Peps would walk up-stairs again.

“Good! We must not disguise from you, sir,” said Doctor Parker Peps, “that there is a want of power in Her Grace the Duchess—I beg your pardon; I confound names; I should say, in your amiable lady. That there is a certain degree of languor, and a general absence of elasticity, which we would rather—not—”

“See,” interposed the family practitioner with another inclination of the head.

“Quite so,” said Doctor Parker Peps, “which we would rather not see. It would appear that the system of Lady Cankaby—excuse me: I should say of Mrs. Dombey: I confuse the names of cases—”

“So very numerous.” murmured the family practitioner—“can’t be expected I’m sure—quite wonderful if otherwise—Doctor Parker Peps’s west-end practice—”

“Thank you,” said the doctor, “quite so. It would appear, I was observing, that the system of our patient has sustained a shock from which it can only hope to rally by a great and strong—”

“And vigorous,” murmured the family practitioner.

“Quite so,” assented the doctor—“and vigorous effort. Mr. Pilkins here, who from his position of medical adviser in this family—no one better qualified to fill that position, I am sure.”

“Oh!” murmured the family practitioner. “‘Praise from Sir Hubert Stanley!’”

“You are good enough,” returned Doctor Parker Peps, “to say so. Mr. Pilkins, who, from his position, is best acquainted with the patient’s constitution in its normal state (an acquaintance very valuable to us in forming our opinions on these occasions), is of opinion with me, that

Nature must be called upon to make a vigorous effort in this instance; and that if our interesting friend the Countess of Dombey—I beg your pardon! Mrs. Dombey—should not be—”

“Able,” said the family practitioner.

“To make that effort successfully,” said Doctor Parker Peps, “then a crisis might arise, which we should both sincerely deplore.”

With that, they stood for a few seconds looking at the ground. Then, on the motion—made in dumb show—of Doctor Parker Peps, they went up-stairs; the family practitioner opening the room door for that distinguished professional, and following him out with most obsequious politeness.

To record of Mr. Dombey that he was not in his way affected by this intelligence, would be to do him an injustice. He was not a man of whom it could properly be said that he was ever startled or shocked; but he certainly had a sense within him, that if his wife should sicken and decay, he would be very sorry, and that he would find a something gone from among his plate and furniture, and other household possessions, which was well worth the having, and could not be lost without sincere regret. Though it would be a cool, business-like, gentlemanly, self-possessed regret, no doubt.

His meditations on the subject were soon interrupted, first by the rustling of garments on the staircase, and then by the sudden whisking into the room of a lady rather past the middle age than otherwise, but dressed in a very juvenile manner, particularly as to the tightness of her boddice, who, running up to him with a kind of screw in her face and carriage, expressive of suppressed emotion, flung her arms round his neck, and said in a choking voice,

“My dear Paul! He’s quite a Dombey!”

“Well, well!” returned her brother—for Mr. Dombey was her brother—“I think he *is* like the family. Don’t agitate yourself, Louisa.”

“It’s very foolish of me,” said Louisa, sitting down, and taking out her pocket-handkerchief, “but he’s—he’s such a perfect Dombey! I never saw anything like it in my life!”

“But what is this about Fanny, herself?” said Mr. Dombey. “How is Fanny?”

“My dear Paul,” returned Louisa, “it’s nothing whatever. Take my word, it’s nothing whatever. There is exhaustion, certainly, but nothing like what I underwent myself, either with George or Frederick. An effort is necessary. That’s all. If dear Fanny were a Dombey!—but I dare say she’ll make it; I have no doubt she’ll make it. Knowing it to be required of her, as a duty,

of course she'll make it. My dear Paul, it's very weak and silly of me, I know, to be so trembly and shaky from head to foot; but I am so very queer that I must ask you for a glass of wine and a morsel of that cake. I thought I should have fallen out of the staircase window as I came down from seeing dear Fanny, and that tiddy ickle sing." These last words originated in a sudden vivid reminiscence of the baby.

They were succeeded by a gentle tap at the door.

"Mrs. Chick," said a very bland female voice outside, "how are you now, my dear friend?"

"My dear Paul," said Louisa in a low voice, as she rose from her seat, "it's Miss Tox. The kindest creature! I never could have got here without her! Miss Tox, my brother Mr. Dombey. Paul my dear, my very particular friend Miss Tox."

The lady thus specially presented, was a long lean figure, wearing such a faded air that she seemed not to have been made in what linen-draper's call "fast colours" originally, and to have, by little and little, washed out. But for this she might have been described as the very pink of general propitiation and politeness. From a long habit of listening admirably to everything that was said in her presence, and looking at the speakers as if she were mentally engaged in taking off impressions of their images upon her soul, never to part with the same but with life, her head had quite settled on one side. Her hands had contracted a spasmodic habit of raising themselves of their own accord as in involuntary admiration. Her eyes were liable to a similar affection. She had the softest voice that ever was heard; and her nose, stupendously aquiline, had a little knob in the very centre or keystone of the bridge, whence it tended downwards towards her face, as in an invincible determination never to turn up at anything.

Miss Tox's dress, though perfectly genteel and good, had a certain character of angularity and scantiness. She was accustomed to wear odd weedy little flowers in her bonnets and caps. Strange grasses were sometimes perceived in her hair; and it was observed by the curious, of all her collars, frills, tuckers, wristbands, and other gossamer articles—indeed of everything she wore which had two ends to it intended to unite—that the two ends were never on good terms, and wouldn't quite meet without a struggle. She had furry articles for winter wear, as tip-pets, boas, and muffs, which stood up on end in a rampant manner, and were not at all sleek. She was much given to the carrying about of small bags with snaps to them, that went off like little pistols when they were shut up; and when full-dressed, she wore round her neck the barrenest of lockets, representing a fishy old

eye, with no approach to speculation in it. These and other appearances of a similar nature, had served to propagate the opinion, that Miss Tox was a lady of what is called a limited independence, which she turned to the best account. Possibly her mincing gait encouraged the belief, and suggested that her clipping a step of ordinary compass into two or three, originated in her habit of making the most of everything.

"I am sure," said Miss Tox, with a prodigious curtsey, "that to have the honour of being presented to Mr. Dombey is a distinction which I have long sought, but very little expected at the present moment. My dear Mrs. Chick—may I say Louisa?"

Mrs. Chick took Miss Tox's hand in hers, rested the foot of her wine-glass upon it, repressed a tear, and said in a low voice "Bless you!"

"My dear Louisa, then," said Miss Tox, "my sweet friend, how are you now?"

"Better," Mrs. Chick returned. "Take some wine. You have been almost as anxious as I have been, and must want it, I am sure."

Mr. Dombey of course officiated.

"Miss Tox, Paul," pursued Mrs. Chick, still retaining her hand, "knowing how much I have been interested in the anticipation of the event of to-day, has been working at a little gift for Fanny, which I promised to present. It is only a pincushion for the toilet table, Paul, but I do say, and will say, and must say, that Miss Tox has very prettily adapted the sentiment to the occasion. I call 'Welcome little Dombey' poetry, myself!"

"Is that the device?" inquired her brother.

"That is the device," returned Louisa.

"But do me the justice to remember, my dear Louisa," said Miss Tox in a tone of low and earnest entreaty, "that nothing but the—I have some difficulty in expressing myself—the dubiousness of the result would have induced me to take so great a liberty: 'Welcome, Master Dombey,' would have been much more congenial to my feelings, as I am sure you know. But the uncertainty attendant on angelic strangers, will, I hope, excuse what must otherwise appear an unwarrantable familiarity." Miss Tox made a graceful bend as she spoke, in favour of Mr. Dombey, which that gentleman graciously acknowledged. Even the sort of recognition of Dombey and Son, conveyed in the foregoing conversation, was so palatable to him, that his sister, Mrs. Chick—though he affected to consider her a weak good-natured person—had perhaps more influence over him than anybody else.

"Well!" said Mrs. Chick, with a sweet smile, "after this, I forgive Fanny everything!"

It was a declaration in a Christian spirit, and Mrs. Chick

felt that it did her good. Not that she had anything particular to forgive in her sister-in-law, nor indeed anything at all, except her having married her brother—in itself a species of audacity—and her having, in the course of events, given birth to a girl instead of a boy: which, as Mrs. Chick had frequently observed, was not quite what she had expected of her, and was not a pleasant return for all the attention and distinction she had met with.

Mr. Dombey being hastily summoned out of the room at this moment, the two ladies were left alone together. Miss Tox immediately became spasmodic.

“I knew you would admire my brother. I had told you so beforehand, my dear,” said Louisa.

Miss Tox’s hands and eyes expressed how much.

“And as to his property, my dear!”

“Ah!” said Miss Tox, with deep feeling.

“Im—mense!”

“But his deportment, my dear Louisa!” said Miss Tox. “His presence! His dignity! No portrait that I have ever seen of any one has been half so replete with those qualities. Something so stately, you know: so uncompromising: so very wide across the chest: so upright! A pecuniary Duke of York, my love, and nothing short of it!” said Miss Tox. “That’s what I should designate him.”

“Why, my dear Paul!” exclaimed his sister, as he returned, “you look quite pale! There’s nothing the matter?”

“I am sorry to say, Louisa, that they tell me that Fanny—”

“Now, my dear Paul,” returned his sister, rising, “don’t believe it. If you have any reliance on my experience, Paul, you may rest assured that there is nothing wanting but an effort on Fanny’s part. And that effort,” she continued, taking off her bonnet, and adjusting her cap and gloves, in a business-like manner, “she must be encouraged, and really, if necessary, urged to make. Now, my dear Paul, come up-stairs with me.”

Mr. Dombey, who, besides being generally influenced by his sister for the reason already mentioned, had really raised in her as an experienced and bustling matron, acquiesced: and followed her, at once, to the sick chamber.

The lady lay upon her bed as he had left her, clasping her little daughter to her breast. The child clung close about her, with the same intensity as before, and never raised her head, or moved her soft cheek from her mother’s face, or looked on those who stood around, or spoke, or moved, or shed a tear.

“Restless without the little girl,” the doctor whis-

pered to Mr. Dombey. "We found it best to have her in again."

There was such a solemn stillness round the bed ; and the two medical attendants seemed to look on the impassive form with so much compassion and so little hope, that Mrs. Chick was for the moment diverted from her purpose. But presently summoning courage, and what she called presence of mind, she sat down by the bedside, and said in the low precise tone of one who endeavours to awaken a sleeper :

"Fanny ! Fanny !"

There was no sound in answer but the loud ticking of Mr. Dombey's watch and Doctor Parker Peps's watch, which seemed in the silence to be running a race.

"Fanny, my dear," said Mrs. Chick, with assumed lightness, "here's Mr. Dombey come to see you. Won't you speak to him ? They want to lay your little boy—the baby, Fanny, you know ; you have hardly seen him yet, I think—in bed ; but they can't till you rouse yourself a little. Don't you think it's time you roused yourself a little ? Eh ?"

She bent her ear to the bed, and listened : at the same time looking round at the bystanders, and holding up her finger.

"Eh ?" she repeated, "what was it you said, Fanny ? I didn't hear you."

No word or sound in answer. Mr. Dombey's watch, and Dr. Parker Peps's watch seemed to be racing faster.

"Now, really Fanny my dear," said the sister-in-law, altering her position, and speaking less confidently, and more earnestly, in spite of herself, "I shall have to be quite cross with you, if you don't rouse yourself. It's necessary for you to make an effort, and perhaps a very great and painful effort which you are not disposed to make ; but this is a world of effort you know, Fanny, and we must never yield, when so much depends upon us. Come ! Try ! I must really scold you if you don't !"

The race in the ensuing pause was fierce and furious. The watches seemed to jostle, and to trip each other up.

"Fanny !" said Louisa, glancing round with a gathering alarm. "Only look at me. Only open your eyes to show me that you hear and understand me ; will you ? Good Heaven, gentlemen, what is to be done !"

The two medical attendants exchanged a look across the bed ; and the physician, stooping down, whispered in the child's ear. Not having understood the purport of his whisper, the little creature turned her perfectly colourless face, and deep dark eyes towards him ; but without loosening her hold in the least.

The whisper was repeated.

“Mama !” said the child.

The little voice, familiar and dearly loved, awakened some show of consciousness, even at that ebb. For a moment, the closed eyelids trembled, and the nostril quivered, and the faintest shadow of a smile was seen.

“Mama !” cried the child sobbing aloud. “Oh dear mama ! oh dear mama !”

The doctor gently brushed the scattered ringlets of the child, aside from the face and mouth of the mother. Alas how calm they lay there ; how little breath there was to stir them !

Thus, clinging fast to that slight spar within her arms, the mother drifted out upon the dark and unknown sea that rolls round all the world.

CHAPTER II.

In which Timely Provision is made for an Emergency that will sometimes arise in the best-regulated Families.

“I SHALL never cease to congratulate myself,” said Mrs. Chick, “on having said, when I little thought what was in store for us,—really as if I was inspired by something,—that I forgave poor dear Fanny everything. Whatever happens, that must always be a comfort to me !”

Mrs. Chick made this impressive observation in the drawing-room, after having descended thither from the inspection of the mantua-makers up-stairs, who were busy on the family mourning. She delivered it for the behoof of Mr. Chick, who was a stout bald gentleman, with a very large face, and his hands continually in his pockets, and who had a tendency in his nature to whistle and hum tunes, which, sensible of the indecorum of such sounds in a house of grief, he was at some pains to repress at present.

“Don’t you over-exert yourself, Loo,” said Mr. Chick, “or you’ll be laid up with spasms, I see. Right tol loor rul ! Bless my soul, I forgot ! We’re here one day and gone the next !”

Mrs. Chick contented herself with a glance of reproof, and then proceeded with the thread of her discourse.

“I am sure,” she said, “I hope this heart-rending occurrence will be a warning to all of us, to accustom ourselves to rouse ourselves and to make efforts in time where they’re required of us. There’s a moral in everything, if we would only avail ourselves of it. It will be our own faults if we lose sight of this one.”

Mr. Chick invaded the grave silence which ensued on this remark with the singularly inappropriate air of

'A cobbler there was;' and checking himself, in some confusion, observed that it was undoubtedly our own faults if we didn't improve such melancholy occasions as the present.

"Which might be better improved, I should think, Mr. C.," retorted his helpmate, after a short pause, than by the introduction, either of the college hornpipe, or the equally unmeaning and unfeeling remark of rump-te-iddity, bow-wow-wow!"—which Mr. Chick had indeed indulged in, under his breath, and which Mrs. Chick repeated in a tone of withering scorn.

"Merely habit, my dear," pleaded Mr. Chick.

"Nonsense! Habit!" returned his wife. "If you're a rational being, don't make such ridiculous excuses. Habit! If I was to get a habit (as you call it) of walking on the ceiling, like the flies, I should hear enough of it; I dare say."

It appeared so probable that such a habit might be attended with some degree of notoriety, that Mr. Chick didn't venture to dispute the position.

"How's the baby, Loo?" asked Mr. Chick: to change the subject.

"What baby do you mean?" answered Mrs. Chick. "I am sure the morning I have had, with that dining-room down-stairs one mass of babies, no one in their senses would believe."

"One mass of babies!" repeated Mr. Chick, staring with an alarmed expression about him.

"It would have occurred to most men," said Mrs. Chick, "that poor dear Fanny being no more, it becomes necessary to provide a nurse."

"Oh! Ah!" said Mr. Chick. "Toor-rul—such is life, I mean. I hope you are suited, my dear."

"Indeed I am not," said Mrs. Chick; "nor likely to be, so far as I can see. Meanwhile, of course, the child is—"

"Going to the very deuce," said Mr. Chick, thoughtfully, "to be sure."

Admonished, however, that he had committed himself, by the indignation expressed in Mrs. Chick's countenance at the idea of a Dombey going there; and thinking to atone for his misconduct by a bright suggestion, he added:

"Couldn't something temporary be done with a teapot?"

If he had meant to bring the subject prematurely to a close, he could not have done it more effectually. After looking at him for some moments in silent resignation, Mrs. Chick walked majestically to the window and peeped through the blind, attracted by the sound of wheels. Mr. Chick, finding that his destiny was, for

the time against him, said no more, and walked off. But it was not always thus with Mr. Chick. He was often in the ascendant himself, and at those times punished Louisa roundly. In their matrimonial bickerings they were, upon the whole, a well-matched, fairly-balanced, give-and-take couple. It would have been, generally speaking, very difficult to have betted on the winner. Often when Mr. Chick seemed beaten, he would suddenly make a start, turn the tables, clatter them about the ears of Mrs. Chick, and carry all before him. Being liable himself to similiar unlooked-for checks from Mrs. Chick, their little contests usually possessed a character of uncertainty that was very animating.

Miss Tox had arrived on the wheels just now alluded to, and came running into the room in a breathless condition.

"My dear Louisa," said Miss Tox, "is the vacancy still unsupplied?"

"You good soul, yes," said Mrs. Chick.

"Then, my dear Louisa," returned Miss Tox, "I hope and believe—but in one moment, my dear, I'll introduce the party."

Running down-stairs again as fast as she had run up, Miss Tox got the party out of the hackney-coach, and soon returned with it under convoy.

It then appeared that she had used the word not in its legal or business acceptation, when it merely expresses an individual, but as a noun of multitude, or signifying many: for Miss Tox escorted a plump rosy-cheeked wholesome apple-faced young woman, with an infant in her arms; a younger woman not so plump, but apple-faced, also, who led a plump and apple-faced child in each hand; another plump and also apple-faced boy who walked by himself; and finally, a plump and apple-faced man, who carried in his arms another plump and apple-faced boy, whom he stood down on the floor, and admonished in a husky whisper to "kitch hold of his brother Johnny."

"My dear Louisa," said Miss Tox, "knowing your great anxiety, and wishing to relieve it, I posted off myself to the Queen Charlotte's Royal Married Females, which you had forgot, and put the question, Was there anybody there that they thought would suit? No, they said, there was not. When they gave me that answer, I do assure you, my dear, I was almost driven to despair on your account. But it did so happen, that one of the Royal Married Females, hearing the inquiry, reminded the matron of another who had gone to her own home, and who, she said, would in all likelihood be most satisfactory. The moment I heard this, and had it cor

roborated by the matron—excellent references and unimpeachable character—I got the address, my dear, and posted off again.”

“Like the dear good Tox, you are !” said Louisa.

“Not at all,” returned Miss Tox. “Don’t say so. Arriving at the house (the cleanest place, my dear ! You might eat your dinner off the floor), I found the whole family sitting at table ; and feeling that no account of them could be half so comfortable to you and Mr. Dombey as the sight of them all together, I brought them all away. This gentleman,” said Miss Tox, pointing out the apple-faced man, “is the father. Will you have the goodness to come a little forward, sir?”

The apple-faced man having sheepishly complied with this request, stood chuckling and grinning in a front row.

“This is his wife, of course,” said Miss Tox, singling out the young woman with the baby. “How do you do, Polly?”

“I’m pretty well, I thank you, ma’am,” said Polly.

By way of bringing her out dexterously, Miss Tox had made the inquiry as in condescension to an old acquaintance, whom she hadn’t seen for a fortnight or so.

“I’m glad to hear it,” said Miss Tox. “The other young woman is her unmarried sister who lives with them, and would take care of her children. Her name’s Jemima. How do you do, Jemima?”

“I’m pretty well, I thank you, ma’am,” returned Jemima.

“I’m very glad indeed to hear it,” said Miss Tox. “I hope you’ll keep so. Five children. Youngest six weeks. The fine little boy with the blister on his nose is the eldest. The blister, I believe,” said Miss Tox, looking round upon the family, “is not constitutional, but accidental?”

The apple-faced man was understood to growl, “Flat iron.”

“I beg your pardon, sir,” said Miss Tox, “did you?—”

“Flat iron,” he repeated.

“Oh yes,” said Miss Tox. “Yes ! Quite true. I forgot. The little creature, in his mother’s absence, smelt a warm flat iron. You’re quite right, sir. You were going to have the goodness to inform me, when we arrived at the door, that you were by trade, a—”

“Stoker,” said the man.

“A choker !” said Miss Tox, quite aghast.

“Stoker,” said the man. “Steam engine.”

“Oh-h ! Yes !” returned Miss Tox, looking thoughtfully at him, and seeming still to have but a very imperfect understanding of his meaning.

“And how do you like it, sir?”

“Which, mum?” said the man.

“That,” replied Miss Tox. “Your trade.”

“Oh! Pretty well, mum. The ashes sometimes gets in here;” touching his chest: “and makes a man speak gruff, as at the present time. But it *is* ashes, mum, not crustiness.”

Miss Tox seemed to be so little enlightened by this reply, as to find a difficulty in pursuing the subject. But Mrs. Chick relieved her, by entering into a close private examination of Polly, her children, her marriage certificate, testimonials, and so forth. Polly coming out unscathed from this ordeal, Mrs. Chick withdrew with her report to her brother's room, and as an emphatic comment on it, and corroboration of it, carried the two rosiest little Toodles with her, Toodle being the family name of the apple-faced family.

Mr. Dombey had remained in his own apartment since the death of his wife, absorbed in visions of the youth, education, and destination of his baby son. Something lay at the bottom of his cool heart, colder and heavier than its ordinary load; but it was more a sense of the child's loss than his own, awakening within him an almost angry sorrow. That the life and progress on which he built such hopes, should be endangered in the outset by so mean a want; that Dombey and Son should be tottering for a nurse, was a sore humiliation. And yet in his pride and jealousy, he viewed with so much bitterness the thought of being dependent for the very first step towards the accomplishment of his soul's desire, on a hired serving-woman who would be to the child, for the time, all that even *his* alliance could have made his own wife, that in every new rejection of a candidate he felt a secret pleasure. The time had now come, however, when he could no longer be divided between those two sets of feelings. The less so, as there seemed to be no flaw in the title of Polly Toodle after his sister had set it forth, with many commendations on the indefatigable friendship of Miss Tox.

“These children look healthy,” said Mr. Dombey.

“But to think of their some day claiming a sort of relationship to Paul! Take them away, Louisa! Let me see this woman and her husband.”

Mrs. Chick bore off the tender pair of Toodles, and presently returned with the tougher couple whose presence her brother had commanded.

“My good woman,” said Mr. Dombey, turning round in his easy-chair, as one piece, and not as a man with limbs and joints, “I understand you are poor, and wish to earn money by nursing the little boy, my son, who has been so prematurely deprived of what can never be

replaced. I have no objection to your adding to the comforts of your family by that means. So far as I can tell, you seem to be a deserving object. But I must impose one or two conditions on you, before you enter my house in that capacity. While you are here, I must stipulate that you are always known as—say as Richards—an ordinary name and convenient. Have you any objection to be known as Richards? You had better consult your husband.”

As the husband did nothing but chuckle and grin, and continually draw his right hand across his mouth, moistening the palm, Mrs. Toodle after nudging him twice or thrice in vain, dropped a curtsey and replied “that perhaps if she was to be called out of her name, it would be considered in the wages.”

“Oh, of course,” said Mr. Dombey. “I desire to make it a question of wages, altogether. Now, Richards, if you nurse my bereaved child, I wish you to remember this always. You will receive a liberal stipend in return for the discharge of certain duties, in the performance of which, I wish you to see as little of your family as possible. When those duties cease to be required and rendered, and the stipend ceases to be paid, there is an end of all relations between us. Do you understand me?”

Mrs. Toodle seemed doubtful about it; and as to Toodle himself, he had evidently no doubt whatever, that he was all abroad.

“You have children of your own,” said Mr. Dombey. “It is not at all in this bargain that you need become attached to my child, or that my child need become attached to you. I don’t expect or desire anything of the kind. Quite the reverse. When you go away from here, you will have concluded what is a mere matter of bargain and sale, hiring and letting: and will stay away. The child will cease to remember you; and you will cease, if you please to remember the child.”

Mrs. Toodle, with a little more colour in her cheeks than she had had before, said “she hoped she knew her place.”

“I hope you do, Richards,” said Mr. Dombey. “I have no doubt you know it very well. Indeed it is so plain and obvious that it could hardly be otherwise. Louisa, my dear, arrange with Richards about money, and let her have it when and how she pleases. Mr. what’s-your-name, a word with you, if you please!”

Thus arrested on the threshold as he was following his wife out of the room, Toodle returned and confronted Mr. Dombey alone. He was a strong, loose, round-shouldered, shuffling, shaggy fellow, on whom his clothes sat negligently: with a good deal of hair and whisker, deepened in its natural tint, perhaps, by smoke and coal-

dust : hard knotty hands : and a square forehead, as coarse in grain as the bark of an oak. A thorough contrast in all respects to Mr. Dombey, who was one of those close-shaved close-cut monied gentlemen who are glossy and crisp like new bank notes, and who seem to be artificially braced and tightened as by the stimulating action of golden shower-baths.

“ You have a son, I believe ? ” said Mr. Dombey.

“ Four on 'em, sir. Four hims and a her. All alive ! ”

“ Why, it's as much as you can afford to keep them ! ” said Mr. Dombey.

“ I couldn't hardly afford but one thir y in the world less, sir. ”

“ What is that ? ”

“ To lose 'em, sir. ”

“ Can you read ? ” asked Mr. Dombey.

“ Why, not partick'ler, sir. ”

“ Write ? ”

“ With chalk, sir. ”

“ With anything ? ”

“ I could make shift to chalk a little bit, I think, if I was put to it, ” said Toodle, after some reflection.

“ And yet, ” said Mr. Dombey, “ you are two or three and thirty, I suppose ? ”

“ Thereabouts, I suppose, sir, ” answered Toodle, after more reflection.

“ Then why don't you learn ? ” asked Mr. Dombey.

“ So I'm a going to, sir. One of my little boys is a going to learn me, when he's old enough, and been to school himself. ”

“ Well ! ” said Mr. Dombey, after looking at him attentively and with no great favour, as he stood gazing around the room (principally the ceiling) and still drawing his hand across and across his mouth. “ You heard what I said to your wife just now ? ”

“ Polly heerd it, ” said Toodle, jerking his hat over his shoulder in the direction of the door, with an air of perfect confidence in his better half. “ It's all right. ”

“ As you appear to leave everything to her, ” said Mr. Dombey, frustrated in his intention of impressing his views still more distinctly on the husband, as the stronger character, “ I suppose it is of no use my saying anything to you. ”

“ Not a bit, ” said Toodle. “ Polly heerd it. *She's* awake, sir. ”

“ I won't detain you any longer then, ” returned Mr. Dombey disappointed. “ Where have you worked all your life ? ”

“ Mostly underground, sir, till I got married. I come

to the level then. I'm a going on one of these here railroads when they comes into full play."

As the last straw breaks the laden camel's back, this piece of underground information crushed the sinking spirits of Mr. Dombey. He motioned his child's foster-father to the door, who departed by no means unwillingly: and then turning the key, paced up and down the room in solitary wretchedness. For all his starched impenetrable dignity and composure, he wiped blinding tears from his eyes as he did so: and often said, with an emotion of which he would not, for the world, have had a witness, "Poor little fellow!"

It may have been characteristic of Mr. Dombey's pride that he pitied himself through the child. Not poor me. Not poor widower, confiding by constraint in the wife of an ignorant Hind who had been working 'mostly underground' all his life, and yet at whose door Death has never knocked, and at whose poor table four sons daily sit—but poor little fellow!

Those words being on his lips, it occurred to him—and it is an instance of the strong attraction with which his hopes and fears and all his thoughts were tending to one centre—that a great temptation was being placed in this woman's way. Her infant was a boy too. Now, would it be possible for her to change them?

Though he was soon satisfied that he had dismissed the idea as romantic and unlikely—though possible, there was no denying—he could not help pursuing it so far as to entertain within himself a picture of what his condition would be, if he should discover such an imposture when he was grown old. Whether a man so situated, would be able to pluck away the result of so many years of usage, confidence, and belief, from the imposture, and endow a stranger with it?

As his unusual emotion subsided, these misgivings gradually melted away, though so much of their shadow remained behind, that he was constant in his resolution to look closely after Richards himself, without appearing to do so. Being now in an easier frame of mind, he regarded the woman's station as rather an advantageous circumstance than otherwise, by placing, in itself, a broad distance between her and the child, and rendering their separation easy and natural.

Meanwhile terms were ratified and agreed upon between Mrs. Chick and Richards, with the assistance of Miss Tox; and Richards being with much ceremony invested with the Dombey baby, as if it were an Order, resigned her own, with many tears and kisses to Jemima. Glasses of wine were then produced, to sustain the drooping spirits of the family.

“You’ll take a glass yourself, sir, won’t you?” said Miss Tox, as Toodle appeared.

“Thankee, mum,” said Toodle, “since you *are* sup-pressing.”

“And you’re very glad to leave your dear good wife in such a comfortable home, ain’t you, sir?” said Miss Tox, nodding and winking at him stealthily.

“No, mum,” said Toodle. “Here’s wishing of her back agin.”

Polly cried more than ever at this. So Mrs. Chick, who had her matronly apprehension that this indulgence in grief might be prejudicial to the little Dombey (“acid, indeed,” she whispered Miss Tox) hastened to the rescue.

“Your little child will thrive charmingly with your sister Jemima, Richards,” said Mrs. Chick; “and you have only to make an effort—this is a world of effort, you know, Richards—to be very happy indeed. You have been already measured for your mourning, haven’t you, Richards?”

“Ye—es, ma’am,” sobbed Polly.

“And it’ll fit beautifully, I know,” said Mrs. Chick, “for the same young person has made me many dresses. The very best materials, too!”

“Lor, you’ll be so smart,” said Miss Tox, “that your husband won’t know you; will you, sir?”

“I should know her, said Toodle, gruffly, “anynows and anywheres.”

Toodle was evidently not to be bought over.

“As to living, Richards, you know,” pursued Mrs. Chick, “why the very best of everything will be at your disposal. You will order your little dinner every day; and anything you take a fancy to, I’m sure will be as readily provided as if you were a lady.”

“Yes, to be sure!” said Miss Tox, keeping up the ball with great sympathy. “And as to porter!—quite unlimited, will it not, Louisa?”

“Oh, certainly!” returned Mrs. Chick, in the same tone. “With a little abstinence, you know, my dear, in point of vegetables.”

“And pickles, perhaps,” suggested Miss Tox.

“With such exceptions,” said Louisa, “she’ll consult her choice entirely, and be under no restraint at all, my love.”

“And then, of course, you know,” said Miss Tox, “however fond she is of her own dear little child—and I’m sure, Louisa, *you* don’t blame her for being fond of it?”

“Oh no!” cried Mrs. Chick, benignantly.

“Still,” resumed Miss Tox, “she naturally must be interested in her young charge, and must consider it a

privilege to see a little cherub closely connected with the superior classes, gradually unfolding itself from day to day at one common fountain. Is it not so, Louisa?"

"Most undoubtedly!" said Mrs. Chick. "You see, my love, she's already quite contented and comfortable, and means to say good-bye to her sister Jemima and her little pets, and her good honest husband with a light heart and a smile—don't she, my dear?"

"Oh yes!" cried Miss Tox. "To be sure she does!"

Notwithstanding which, however, poor Polly embraced them all round in great distress, and finally ran away to avoid any more particular leave-taking between herself and the children. But the stratagem hardly succeeded as well as it deserved; for the smallest boy but one divining her intent, immediately began swarming upstairs after her—if that word of doubtful etymology be admissible—on his arms and legs; while the eldest (known in the family by the name of Biler, in remembrance of the steam-engine) beat a demoniacal tattoo with his boots, expressive of grief; in which he was joined by the rest of the family.

A quantity of oranges and halfpence, thrust indiscriminately on each young Toodle, checked the first violence of their regret, and the family were speedily transported to their own home, by means of the hackney-coach kept in waiting for that purpose. The children, under the guardianship of Jemima, blocked up the window, and dropped out oranges and halfpence all the way along. Mr. Toodle himself preferred to ride behind among the spikes, as being the mode of conveyance to which he was best accustomed.

CHAPTER III.

In which Mr. Dombey, as a Man and a Father, is seen at the Head of the Home-Department.

THE funeral of the deceased lady having been "performed" to the entire satisfaction of the undertaker, as well as of the neighbourhood at large, which is generally disposed to be captious on such a point, and is prone to take offence at any omissions or shortcomings in the ceremonies, the various members of Mr. Dombey's household subsided into their several places in the domestic system. That small world, like the great one out of doors, had the capacity of easily forgetting its dead; and when the cook had said she was a quiet-tempered lady, and the house-keeper said it was the common lot, and the butler, had said who'd have thought it, and the housemaid had said she couldn't hardly believe it,

and the footman had said it seemed exactly like a dream, they had quite worn the subject out, and began to think their mourning was wearing rusty too.

On Richards, who was established up-stairs in a state of honourable captivity, the dawn of her new life seemed to break cold and grey. Mr. Dombey's house was a large one, on the shady side of a tall, dark, dreadfully genteel street in the region between Portland-place and Bryanstone-square. It was a corner house, with great wide areas containing cellars frowned upon by barred windows, and leered at by crooked-eyed doors leading to dustbins. It was a house of dismal state, with a circular back to it, containing a whole suite of drawing-rooms looking upon a gravelled yard, where two gaunt trees, with blackened trunks and branches, rattled rather than rustled, their leaves were so smoke-dried. The summer sun was never on the street but in the morning about breakfast time, when it came with the water-carts and the the old-clothes men, and the people with geraniums, and umbrella-mender, and the man who trilled the little bell of the Dutch clock as he went along. It was soon gone again to return no more that day; and the bands of music and the straggling Punch's shows going after it, left it a prey to the most dismal of organs, and white mice; with now and then a porcupine, to vary the entertainments; until the butlers whose families were dining out, began to stand at the house doors in the twilight, and the lamp-lighter made his nightly failure in attempting to brighten up the street with gas.

It was as blank a house inside as outside. When the funeral was over, Mr. Dombey ordered the furniture to be covered up—perhaps to preserve it for the son with whom his plans were all associated—and the rooms to be ungarnished, saving such as he retained for himself on the ground floor. Accordingly, mysterious shapes were made of tables and chairs, heaped together in the middle of rooms, and covered over with great winding-sheets. Bell-handles, window-blinds, and looking-glasses, being papered up in journals, daily and weekly, obtruded fragmentary accounts of deaths and dreadful murders. Every chandelier or lustre, muffled in holland, looked like a monstrous tear depending from the ceiling's eye. Odours, as from vaults and damp places, came out of the chimneys. The dead and buried lady was awful in a picture frame of ghastly bandages. Every gust of wind that rose, brought eddying round the corner from the neighbouring mews, some fragments of the straw that had been strewn before the house when she was ill, mildewed remains of which were still cleaving to the neighbourhood; and these, being always drawn by some invisible attraction to the threshold of the dirty

house to let immediately opposite, addressed a dismal eloquence to Mr. Dombey's windows.

The apartments which Mr. Dombey reserved for his own inhabiting, were attainable from the hall, and consisted of a sitting-room; a library, which was in fact a dressing-room, so that the smell of hot-pressed paper, vellum, morocco, and Russia leather, contended in it with the smell of divers pairs of boots; and a kind of conservatory or little glass breakfast-room beyond, commanding a prospect of the trees before mentioned, and generally speaking of a few prowling cats. These three rooms opened upon one another. In the morning, when Mr. Dombey was at his breakfast in one or other of the two first mentioned of them, as well as in the afternoon when he came home to dinner, a bell was rung for Richards to repair to this glass chamber, and there walk to and fro with her young charge. From the glimpses she caught of Mr. Dombey at these times, sitting in the dark distance, looking out towards the infant from among the dark heavy furniture—the house had been inhabited for years by his father, and in many of its appointments was old-fashioned and grim—she began to entertain ideas of him in his solitary state, as if he were a lone prisoner in a cell, or a strange apparition that was not to be accosted or understood.

Little Paul Dombey's foster-mother had led this life herself and had carried little Paul through it for some weeks; and had returned up-stairs one day from a melancholy saunter through the dreary rooms of state (she never went out without Mrs. Chick, who called on fine mornings, usually accompanied by Miss Tox, to take her and Baby for an airing—or in other words, to march them gravely up and down the pavement; like a walking funeral); when, as she was sitting in her own room, the door was slowly and quietly opened, and a dark-eyed little girl looked in.

"It's Miss Florence come home from her aunt's, no doubt," thought Richards, who had never seen the child before. "Hope I see you well, miss."

"Is that my brother?" asked the child, pointing to the baby.

"Yes, my pretty," answered Richards. "Come and kiss him."

But the child, instead of advancing, looked her earnestly in the face, and said:

"What have you done with my Mama?"

"Lord bless the little creeter!" cried Richards, "what a sad question! I done? Nothing, miss."

"What have *they* done with my Mama?" inquired the child.

"I never saw such a melting thing in all my life!"

said Richards, who naturally substituted for this child one of her own, inquiring for herself in like circumstances. "Come nearer here, my dear miss! Don't be afraid of me."

"I am not afraid of you," said the child, drawing nearer. "But I want to know what they have done with my Mama."

"My darling," said Richards, "you wear that pretty black frock in remembrance of your Mama."

"I can remember my Mama," returned the child, with tears springing to her eyes, "in any frock."

"But people put on black, to remember people when they're gone."

"Where gone?" asked the child.

"Come and sit down by me," said Richards, "and I'll tell you a story."

With a quick perception that it was intended to relate to what she had asked, little Florence laid aside the bonnet she had held in her hand until now, and sat down on a stool at the nurse's feet, looking up into her face.

"Once upon a time," said Richards, "there was a lady—a very good lady, and her little daughter dearly loved her."

"A very good lady, and her little daughter dearly loved her," repeated the child.

"Who, when God thought it right that it should be so, was taken ill and died."

The child shuddered.

"Died, never to be seen again by any one on earth, and was buried in the ground where the trees grow."

"The cold ground," said the child shuddering again.

"No! The warm ground," returned Polly, seizing her advantage, "where the ugly little seeds turn into beautiful flowers, and into grass, and corn, and I don't know what all besides. Where good people turn into bright angels, and fly away to Heaven!"

The child, who had drooped her head, raised it again, and sat looking at her intently.

"So; let me see," said Polly, not a little flurried between this earnest scrutiny, her desire to comfort the child, her sudden success, and her very slight confidence in her own powers. "So, when this lady died, wherever they took her, or wherever they put her, she went to GOD! and she prayed to Him, this lady did," said Polly, affecting herself beyond measure; being heartily in earnest, "to teach her little daughter to be sure of that in her heart: and to know that she was happy there and loved her still: and to hope and try—Oh all her life—to meet her there one day, never, never, never to part any more."

"It was my Mama!" exclaimed the child, springing up, and clasping her round the neck.

"And the child's heart," said Polly, drawing her to her breast: "the little daughter's heart was so full of the truth of this, that even when she heard it from a strange nurse that couldn't tell it right, but was a poor mother herself and that was all, she found a comfort in it—didn't feel so lonely—sobbed and cried upon her bosom—took kindly to the baby lying in her lap—and—there, there, there!" said Polly smoothing the child's curls and dropping tears upon them. "There, poor dear!"

"Oh well, Miss Floy! And won't your Pa be angry neither!" cried a quick voice at the door, proceeding from a short, brown, womanly girl of fourteen, with a little snub nose and black eyes like jet beads. "When it was 'tickerlerly given out that you wasn't to go and worrit the wet nurse."

"She don't worry me," was the surprised rejoinder of Polly. "I am very fond of children."

"Oh! but begging your pardon, Mrs. Richards, that don't matter you know," returned the black-eyed girl, who was so desperately sharp and biting that she seemed to make one's eyes water. "I may be very fond of pennywinkles, Mrs. Richards, but it don't follow that I'm to have 'em for tea."

"Well, it don't matter," said Polly.

"Oh thankee, Mrs. Richards, don't it!" returned the sharp girl. "Remembering, however, if you'll be so good, that Miss Floy's under my charge, and Master Paul's under your'n."

"But still we needn't quarrel," said Polly.

"Oh no, Mrs. Richards," rejoined Spitfire. "Not at all, I don't wish it, we needn't stand upon that footing, Miss Floy being a permanency, Master Paul a temporary." Spitfire made use of none but comma pauses; shooting out whatever she had to say in one sentence, and in one breath, if possible.

"Miss Florence has just come home, hasn't she?" asked Polly.

"Yes, Mrs. Richards, just come home, and here, Miss Floy, before you've been in the house a quarter of an hour, you go a smearing your wet face against the expensive mourning that Mrs. Richards is a wearing for your Ma!" With this remonstrance, young Spitfire, whose real name was Susan Nipper, detached the child from her new friend by a wrench—as if she were a tooth. But she seemed to do it, more in the excessively sharp exercise of her official functions, than with any deliberate unkindness.

"She'll be quite happy, now she has come home



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—Dombey and Son, Vol. Eleven, page 361.

again," said Polly, nodding to her with an encouraging smile upon her wholesome face, "and will be so pleased to see her dear Papa to-night."

"Lork, Mrs. Richards!" cried Miss Nipper, taking up her words with a jerk. "Don't. See her dear Papa indeed! I should like to see her do it!"

"Won't she then?" asked Polly.

"Lork, Mrs. Richards, no, her Pa's a deal too wrapped up in somebody else, and before there was a somebody else to be wrapped up in she never was a favourite, girls are thrown away in this house, Mrs. Richards, I assure you."

The child looked quickly from one nurse to the other, as if she understood and felt what was said.

"You surprise me!" cried Polly. "Hasn't Mr Dombey seen her since—"

"No," interrupted Susan Nipper. "Not once since, and he hadn't hardly set his eyes upon her before that for months and months, and I don't think he'd have known her for his own child if he had met her in the streets, or would know her for his own child if he was to meet her in the streets to-morrow, Mrs. Richards, as to *me*," said Spitfire, with a giggle, "I doubt if he's aweer of my existence."

"Pretty dear!" said Richards; meaning, not Miss Nipper, but the little Florence.

"Oh! there's a Tartar within a hundred miles of where we're now in conversation, I can tell you, Mrs. Richards, present company always excepted too," said Susan Nipper; "wish you good morning, Mrs. Richards, now Miss Floy, you come along with me, and don't go hanging back like a naughty wicked child that judgments is no examples to, don't."

In spite of being thus adjured, and in spite also of some hauling on the part of Susan Nipper, tending towards the dislocation of her right shoulder, little Florence broke away, and kissed her new friend, affectionately.

"Good bye!" said the child. "God bless you! I shall come to see you again soon, and you'll come to see me! Susan will let us. Won't you, Susan?"

Spitfire seemed to be in the main a good-natured little body, although a disciple of that school of trainers of the young idea which holds that childhood, like money, must be shaken and rattled and jostled about a good deal to keep it bright. For, being thus appealed to with some endearing gestures and caresses, she folded her small arms and shook her head, and conveyed a relenting expression into her very-wide-open black eyes.

"It ain't right of you to ask it, Miss Floy, for you know I can't refuse you, but Mrs. Richards and me

will see what can be done, if Mrs. Richards likes, I may wish, you see, to take a voyage to Chancery, Mrs. Richards, but I mayn't know how to leave the London Docks."

Richards assented to the proposition.

"This house ain't so exactly ringing with merry-making," said Miss Nipper, "that one need be lonelier than one must be. Your Toxes and your Chickses may draw out my two front double teeth, Mrs. Richards, but that's no reason why I need offer 'em the whole set."

This proposition was also assented to by Richards, as an obvious one.

"So I'm agreeable, I'm sure," said Susan Nipper, "to live friendly, Mrs. Richards, while Master Paul continues a permanency, if the means can be planned out without going openly against orders, but goodness gracious ME, Miss Floy, you haven't got your things off yet, you naughty child, you haven't, come along!"

With these words Susan Nipper, in a transport of coercion, made a charge at her young ward, and swept her out of the room.

The child, in her grief and neglect, was so gentle, so quiet, and uncomplaining; was possessed of so much affection, that no one seemed to care to have, and so much sorrowful intelligence that no one seemed to mind or think about the wounding of; that Polly's heart was sore when she was left alone again. In the simple passage that had taken place between herself and the motherless little girl, her own motherly heart had been touched no less than the child's; and she felt, as the child did, that there was something of confidence and interest between them from that moment.

Notwithstanding Mr. Toodle's great reliance on Polly, she was perhaps in point of artificial accomplishments very little his superior. But she was a good plain sample of a nature that is ever, in the mass, better, truer, higher, nobler, quicker to feel, and much more constant to retain, all tenderness and pity, self-denial and devotion, than the nature of men. And, perhaps, unlearned as she was, she could have brought a dawning knowledge home to Mr. Dombey at that early day, which would not then have struck him in the end like lightning.

But this is from the purpose. Polly only thought, at that time, of improving on her successful propitiation of Miss Nipper, and devising some means of having little Florence beside her, lawfully, and without rebellion. An opening happened to present itself that very night.

She had been rung down into the glass room as usual, and had walked about and about it a long time, with the baby in her arms, when, to her great surprise and dismay, Mr. Dombey came out suddenly and stopped before her.

“ Good evening, Richards.”

Just the same austere, stiff gentleman, as he had appeared to her on that first day. Such a hard-looking gentleman, that she involuntarily dropped her eyes and her curtsey at the same time.

“ How is Master Paul, Richards ?”

“ Quite thriving, sir, and well.”

“ He looks so,” said Mr. Dombey glancing with great interest at the tiny face she uncovered for his observation, and yet affecting to be half careless of it. “ They give you everything you want, I hope ?”

“ Oh yes, thank you, sir.”

She suddenly appended such an obvious hesitation to this reply, however, that Mr. Dombey, who had turned away, stopped, and turned round again, inquiringly.

“ I believe nothing is so good for making children lively and cheerful, sir, as seeing other children playing about 'em,” observed Polly, taking courage.

“ I think I mentioned to you, Richards, when you came here,” said Mr. Dombey with a frown, “ that I wished you to see as little of your family as possible. You can continue your walk if you please.”

With that, he disappeared into his inner room ; and Polly had the satisfaction of feeling that he had thoroughly misunderstood her object, and that she had fallen into disgrace without the least advancement of her purpose.

Next night, she found him walking about the conservatory when she came down. As she stopped at the door, checked by this unusual sight, and uncertain whether to advance or retreat, he called her in.

“ If you really think that sort of society is good for the child,” he said sharply, as if there had been no interval since she proposed it, “ where's Miss Florence ?”

“ Nothing could be better than Miss Florence, sir,” said Polly eagerly, “ but I understood from her little maid that they were not to—”

Mr. Dombey rang the bell, and walked till it was answered.

“ Tell them always to let Miss Florence be with Richards when she chooses, and go out with her, and so forth. Tell them to let the children be together, when Richards wishes it.”

The iron was now hot, and Richards striking on it boldly—it was a good cause and she was bold in it, though instinctively afraid of Mr. Dombey—requested that Miss Florence might be sent down then and there, to make friends with her little brother.

She feigned to be dandling the child as the servant retired on this errand, but she thought she saw that Mr. Dombey's colour changed ; that the expression of his

face quite altered; that he turned hurriedly, as if to gainsay what he had said, or she had said, or both, and was only deterred by very shame.

And she was right. The last time he had seen his slighted child, there had been that in the sad embrace between her and her dying mother, which was at once a revelation and a reproach to him. Let him be absorbed as he would in the Son on whom he built such high hopes, he could not forget that closing scene. He could not forget that he had had no part in it. That, at the bottom of its clear depths of tenderness and truth, lay those two figures clasped in each other's arms, while he stood on the bank above them, looking down a mere spectator—not a sharer with them—quite shut out.

Unable to exclude these things from his remembrance, or to keep his mind free from such imperfect shapes of the meaning with which they were fraught, as were able to make themselves visible to him through the mist of his pride, his previous feelings of indifference towards little Florence changed into an uneasiness of an extraordinary kind. He almost felt as if she watched and distrusted him. As if she held the clue to something secret in his breast, of the nature of which he was hardly informed himself. As if she had an innate knowledge of one jarring and discordant string within him, and her very breath could sound it.

His feeling about the child had been negative from her birth. He had never conceived an aversion to her; it had not been worth his while or in his humour. She had never been a positively disagreeable object to him. But now he was ill at ease about her. She troubled his peace. He would have preferred to put her idea aside altogether, if he had known how. Perhaps—who shall decide on such mysteries?—he was afraid that he might come to hate her.

When little Florence timidly presented herself, Mr. Dombey stopped in his pacing up and down, and looked towards her. Had he looked with greater interest and with a father's eye, he might have read in her keen glance the impulses and fears that made her waver; the passionate desire to run clinging to him, crying, as she hid her face in his embrace, "Oh, father, try to love me! there's no one else!" the dread of a repulse; the fear of being too bold, and of offending him; the pitiable need in which she stood of some assurance and encouragement; and how her overcharged young heart was wandering to find some natural resting-place, for its sorrow and affection.

But he saw nothing of this. He saw her pause irresolutely at the door and look towards him; and he saw no more.

“Come in,” he said, “come in : what is the child afraid of?”

She came in ; and after glancing round her for a moment with an uncertain air, stood pressing her small hands hard together, close within the door.

“Come here, Florence,” said her father, coldly. “Do you know who I am?”

“Yes, papa.”

“Have you nothing to say to me?”

The tears that stood in her eyes as she raised them quickly to his face, were frozen by the expression it wore. She looked down again, and put out her trembling hand.

Mr. Dombey took it loosely in his own, and stood looking down upon her for a moment as if he knew as little as the child, what to say or do.

“There ! Be a good girl !” he said, patting her on the head, and regarding her as it were by stealth with a disturbed and doubtful look. “Go to Richards ! Go !”

His little daughter hesitated for another instant as though she would have clung about him still, or had some lingering hope that he might raise her in his arms and kiss her. She looked up in his face once more. He thought how like her expression was then, to what it had been when she looked round at the doctor—that night—and instinctively dropped her hand and turned away.

It was not difficult to perceive that Florence was at a great disadvantage in her father’s presence. It was not only a constraint upon the child’s mind, but even upon the natural grace and freedom of her actions. Still Polly persevered with all the better heart for seeing this ; and, judging of Mr. Dombey by herself, had great confidence in the mute appeal of poor little Florence’s mourning dress. “It’s hard indeed,” thought Polly, “if he takes only to one little motherless child, when he has another, and that a girl, before his eyes.”

So, Polly kept her before his eyes, as long as she could, and managed so well with little Paul, as to make it very plain that he was all the livelier for his sister’s company. When it was time to withdraw up-stairs again, she would have sent Florence into the inner room to say good-night to her father, but the child was timid and drew back ; and when she urged her again, said, spreading her hands before her eyes, as if to shut out her own unworthiness, “Oh no no ! He don’t want me. He don’t want me.”

The little altercation between them had attracted the notice of Mr. Dombey, who inquired from the table where he was sitting at his wine, what the matter was.

“Miss Florence was afraid of interrupting, sir, if she came in to say good-night,” said Richards.

“It doesn’t matter,” returned Mr. Dombey. “You can let her come and go without regarding me.”

The child shrunk as she listened—and was gone, before her humble friend looked round again.

However, Polly triumphed not a little in the success of her well-intentioned scheme, and in the address with which she had brought it to bear; whereof she made a full disclosure to Spitfire when she was once more safely intrenched up-stairs. Miss Nipper received that proof of her confidence, as well as the prospect of their free association for the future, rather coldly, and was anything but enthusiastic in her demonstrations of joy.

“I thought you would have been pleased,” said Polly.

“Oh yes, Mrs. Richards, I am very well pleased, thank you,” returned Susan, who had suddenly become so very upright that she seemed to have put an additional bone in her stays.

“You don’t show it,” said Polly.

“Oh! Being only a permanency I couldn’t be expected to show it like a temporary,” said Susan Nipper. “Temporaries carries it all before ’em here, I find, but though there’s a excellent party-wall between this house and the next, I mayn’t exactly like to go to it, Mrs. Richards, notwithstanding!”

CHAPTER IV.

In which some more First Appearances are made on the Stage of these Adventures.

THOUGH the offices of Dombey and Son were within the liberties of the city of London, and within hearing of Bow Bells, when their clashing voices were not drowned by the uproar in the streets, yet were there hints of adventurous and romantic story to be observed in some of the adjacent objects. Gog and Magog held their state within ten minutes’ walk; the Royal Exchange was close at hand; the Bank of England with its vaults of gold and silver “down among the dead men” underground, was their magnificent neighbour. Just round the corner stood the rich East India House, teeming with suggestions of precious stuffs and stones, tigers, elephants, howdahs, hookahs, umbrellas, palm-trees, palanquins, and gorgeous princes of a brown complexion sitting on carpets with their slippers very much turned up at the toes. Anywhere in the immediate vicinity there might be seen pictures of ships speeding away full sail to all parts of the world; outfitting ware-houses ready to

pack off anybody anywhere, fully equipped in half an hour; and little timber midshipmen in obsolete naval uniforms, eternally employed outside the shop-doors of nautical instrument-makers in taking observations of the hackney-coaches.

Sole master and proprietor of one of these effigies—of that which might be called, familiarly, the wooden-est—of that which thrust itself out above the pavement, right leg foremost, with a suavity the least endurable, and had the shoe-buckles and flapped waistcoat the least reconcileable to human reason, and bore at its right eye the most offensively disproportionate piece of machinery—sole master and proprietor of that midshipman, and proud of him too, an elderly gentleman in a Welsh wig, had paid house-rent, taxes, and dues, for more years than many a full-grown midshipman of flesh and blood has numbered in his life; and midshipmen who have attained a pretty green old age, have not been wanting in the English navy.

The stock-in-trade of this old gentleman comprised chronometers, barometers, telescopes, compasses, charts, maps, sextants, quadrants, and specimens of every kind of instrument used in the working of a ship's course, or the keeping of a ship's reckoning, or the prosecuting of a ship's discoveries. Objects in brass and glass were in his drawers and on his shelves, which none but the initiated could have found the top of, or guessed the use of, or having examined, could have ever got back again into their mahogany nests without assistance. Everything was jammed into the tightest cases, fitted into the narrowest corners, fenced up behind the most impertinent cushions, and screwed into the acutest angles, to prevent its philosophical composure from being disturbed by the rolling of the sea. Such extraordinary precautions were taken in every instance to save room, and keep the thing compact; and so much practical navigation was fitted, and cushioned, and screwed into every box (whether the box was a mere slab, as some were, or something between a cocked hat and a star-fish, as others were, and those quite mild and modest boxes as compared with others); that the shop itself, partaking of the general infection, seemed almost to become a snug, sea-going, ship-shape concern, wanting only good sea-room, in the event of an unexpected launch, to work its way securely to any desert island in the world.

Many minor incidents in the household life of the Ship's Instrument-maker who was proud of his little midshipman, assisted and bore out this fancy. His acquaintance lying chiefly among ship-chandlers and so forth, he had always plenty of the veritable ships' biscuit on his table. It was familiar with dried meats and tongues, possess-

ing an extraordinary flavour of rope yarn. Pickles were produced upon it, in great wholesale jars, with "dealer in all kinds of Ships' Provisions" on the label; spirits were set forth in case bottles with no throats. Old prints of ships with alphabetical references to their various mysteries, hung in frames upon the walls; the Tartar Frigate under weigh, was on the plates; outlandish shells, seaweeds, and mosses, decorated the chimney-piece; the little wainscoted back parlour was lighted by a skylight, like a cabin.

Here he lived too, in skipper-like state, all alone with his nephew Walter: a boy of fourteen who looked quite enough like a midshipman, to carry out the prevailing idea. But there it ended, for Solomon Gills himself (more generally called old Sol) was far from having a maritime appearance. To say nothing of his Welsh wig, which was as plain and stubborn a Welsh wig as ever was worn, and in which he looked like anything but a Rover, he was a slow, quietspoken, thoughtful old fellow, with eyes as red as if they had been small suns looking at you, through a fog; and a newly awakened manner, such as he might have acquired by having stared for three or four days successively through every optical instrument in his shop, and suddenly came back to the world again, to find it green. The only change ever known in his outward man, was from a complete suit of coffee-colour cut very square, and ornamented with glaring buttons, to the same suit of coffee colour minus the inexpressibles, which were then of a pale nankeen. He wore a very precise shirt-frill, and carried a pair of first-rate spectacles on his forehead, and a tremendous chronometer in his fob, rather than doubt which precious possession, he would have believed in a conspiracy against it on the part of all the clocks and watches in the city, and even of the very Sun itself. Such as he was, such he had been in the shop and parlour, behind the little midshipman, for years upon years; going regularly aloft to bed every night in a howling garret remote from the lodgers, where, when gentlemen of England who lived below at ease had little or no idea of the state of the weather, it often blew great guns.

It is half-past five o'clock, and an autumn afternoon when the reader and Solomon Gills become acquainted. Solomon Gills is in the act of seeing what time it is by the unimpeachable chronometer. The usual daily clearance has been making in the city for an hour or more; and the human tide is still rolling westward. 'The streets have thinned,' as Mr. Gills says, 'very much.' It threatens to be wet to-night. All the weather-glasses in the shop are in low spirits, and the rain already shines upon the cocked hat of the wooden midshipman.

"Where's Walter, I wonder!" said Solomon Gills,

after he had carefully put up the chronometer again. "Here's dinner been ready, half an hour, and no Walter!"

Turning round upon his stool behind the counter, Mr. Gills looked out among the instruments in the window, to see if his nephew might be crossing the road. No. He was not among the bobbing umbrellas, and he certainly was not the newspaper boy in the oilskin cap who was slowly working his way along the piece of brass outside, writing his name over Mr. Gills' name with his forefinger.

"If I didn't know he was too fond of me to make a run of it, and go and enter himself aboard ship against my wishes, I should begin to be fidgetty," said Mr. Gills, tapping two or three weather glasses with his knuckles. "I really should. All in the Downs, eh! Lots of moisture! Well! it's wanted."

"I believe," said Mr. Gills, blowing the dust off the glass top of a compass case, "that you don't point more direct and due to the back parlour than the boy's inclination does after all. And the parlour couldn't bear straighter either. Due north. Not the twentieth part of a point either way."

"Halloa Uncle Sol!"

"Halloa my boy!" cried the Instrument-maker, turning briskly round. "What! you are here, are you!"

A cheerful-looking, merry boy, fresh with running home in the rain; fair-faced, bright-eyed, and curly-haired.

"Well uncle, how have you got on without me all day! Is dinner ready? I'm so hungry."

"As to getting on," said Solomon good-naturedly, "it would be odd if I couldn't get on without a young dog like you a great deal better than with you. As to dinner being ready, it's been ready this half hour and waiting for you. As to being hungry, I am!"

"Come along then, uncle!" cried the boy. "Hurrah for the admiral!"

"Confound the admiral!" returned Solomon Gills. "You mean the Lord Mayor."

"No I don't!" cried the boy. "Hurrah for the admiral. Hurrah for the admiral! For—ward!"

At this word of command, the Welsh wig and its wearer were borne without resistance into the back parlour, as at the head of a boarding party of five hundred men; and uncle Sol and his nephew were speedily engaged on a fried sole with a prospect of steak to follow.

"The Lord Mayor, Wally," said Solomon, "for ever! No more admirals. The Lord Mayor's *your* admiral."

"Oh, is he though!" said the boy, shaking his head.

“Why, the Sword Bearer’s better than him. He draws *his* sword sometimes.”

“And a pretty figure he cuts with it for his pains,” returned the uncle. “Listen to me Wally, listen to me. Look on the mantel-shelf.”

“Why who has cocked my silver mug up there, on a nail?” exclaimed the boy.

“I have,” said his uncle. “No more mugs now. We must begin to drink out of glasses to-day, Walter. We are men of business. We belong to the city. We started in life this morning.”

“Well, uncle,” said the boy, “I’ll drink out of anything you like, so long as I can drink to you. Here’s to you, Uncle Sol, and hurrah for the—”

“Lord Mayor,” interrupted the old man.

“For the Lord Mayor, Sheriffs, Common Council, and Livery,” said the boy. “Long life to ’em!”

The uncle nodded his head with great satisfaction. “And now,” he said, “let’s hear something about the Firm.”

“Oh! there’s not much to be told about the Firm, uncle,” said the boy, plying his knife and fork. “It’s a precious dark set of offices, and in the room where I sit, there’s a high fender, and an iron safe, and some cards about ships that are going to sail, and an almanack, and some desks and stools, and an ink-bottle, and some books, and some boxes, and a lot of cobwebs, and in one of ’em, just over my head, a shrivelled-up blue-bottle that looks as if it had hung there for ever so long.”

“Nothing else?” said the uncle.

“No, nothing else, except an old bird-cage (I wonder how *that* ever came there!) and a coal-scuttle.”

“No bankers’ books, or cheque books, or bills, or such tokens of wealth rolling in from day to day?” said old Sol, looking wistfully at his nephew out of the fog that always seemed to hang about him, and laying an unctuous emphasis upon the words.

“Oh yes, plenty of that I suppose,” returned his nephew carelessly; “but all that sort of thing’s in Mr. Carker’s room, or Mr. Morfin’s, or Mr. Dombey’s.”

“Has Mr. Dombey been there to-day?” inquired the uncle.

“Oh yes! In and out all day.”

“He didn’t take any notice of you, I suppose.”

“Yes he did. He walked up to my seat,—I wish he wasn’t so solemn and stiff, uncle—and said ‘Oh! you are the son of Mr. Gills the Ships’ Instrument-maker.’ ‘Nephew, sir,’ I said. ‘I said nephew, boy,’ said he. But I could take my oath he said son, uncle.”

“You’re mistaken I dare say. It’s no matter.”

“No, it’s no matter, but he needn’t have been so

sharp, I thought. There was no harm in it though he did say so. Then he told me that you had spoken to him about me, and that he had found me employment in the House accordingly, and that I was expected to be attentive and punctual, and then he went away. I thought he didn't seem to like me much."

"You mean, I suppose," observed the Instrument-maker, "that you didn't seem to like him much."

"Well, uncle," returned the boy, laughing. "Perhaps so; I never thought of that."

Solomon looked a little graver as he finished his dinner, and glanced from time to time at the boy's bright face. When dinner was done, and the cloth was cleared away (the entertainment had been brought from a neighbouring eating-house), he lighted a candle, and went down below into a little cellar, while his nephew, standing on the mouldy staircase, dutifully held the light. After a moment's groping here and there, he presently returned with a very ancient-looking bottle, covered with dust and dirt.

"Why, Uncle Sol!" said the boy, "what are you about! that's the wonderful Madeira—there's only one more bottle!"

Uncle Sol nodded his head, implying that he knew very well what he was about; and having drawn the cork in solemn silence, filled two glasses and set the bottle and a third clean glass on the table.

"You shall drink the other bottle, Wally," he said, "when you come to good fortune; when you are a thriving, respected, happy man; when the start in life you have made to-day shall have brought you, as I pray Heaven it may!—to a smooth part of the course you have to run, my child. My love to you!"

Some of the fog that hung about old Sol seemed to have got into his throat; for he spoke huskily. His hand shook too, as he clinked his glass against his nephew's. But having once got the wine to his lips, he tossed it off like a man, and smacked them afterwards.

"Dear uncle," said the boy, affecting to make light of it, while the tears stood in his eyes, "for the honour you have done me, et cetera, et cetera. I shall now beg to propose Mr. Solomon Gills with three times three and one cheer more. Hurrah! and you'll return thanks, uncle, when we drink the last bottle together; won't you?"

They clinked their glasses again; and Walter, who was hoarding his wine, took a sip of it, and held the glass up to his eye with as critical an air as he could possibly assume.

His uncle sat looking at him for some time in silence. When their eyes at last met, he began at once to pursue

the theme that had occupied his thoughts, aloud, as if he had been speaking all the while.

"You see, Walter," he said, "in truth this business is merely a habit with me. I am so accustomed to the habit that I could hardly live if I relinquished it: but there's nothing doing, nothing doing. When that uniform was worn," pointing out towards the little midshipman, "then indeed, fortunes were to be made, and were made. But competition, competition—new invention, new invention—alteration, alteration—the world's gone past me. I hardly know where I am myself; much less where my customers are."

"Never mind 'em uncle!"

"Since you came home from weekly boarding-school at Peckham, for instance—and that's ten days," said Solomon, "I don't remember more than one person that has come into the shop."

"Two uncle, don't you recollect? There was the man who came to ask for change for a sovereign—"

"That's the one," said Solomon.

"Why uncle! don't you call the woman anybody, who came to ask the way to Mile-end Turnpike?"

"Oh! it's true," said Solomon, "I forgot her. Two persons."

"To be sure, they didn't buy anything," cried the boy.

"No. They didn't buy anything," said Solomon, quietly.

"Nor want anything," cried the boy.

"No. If they had, they'd gone to another shop," said Solomon, in the same tone.

"But there were two of 'em uncle," cried the boy, as if that were a great triumph. "You said only one."

"Well, Wally," resumed the old man, after a short pause: "not being like the savages who came on Robinson Crusoe's island, we can't live on a man who asks for change for a sovereign, and a woman who inquires the way to Mile-end Turnpike. As I said just now, the world has gone past me. I don't blame it; but I no longer understand it. Tradesmen are not the same as they used to be, apprentices are not the same, business is not the same, business commodities are not the same. Seven-eighths of my stock is old-fashioned. I am an old-fashioned man in an old-fashioned shop, in a street that is not the same as I remember it. I have fallen behind the time, and am too old to catch it again. Even the noise it makes a long way ahead, confuses me."

Walter was going to speak, but his uncle held up his hand.

"Therefore Wally—therefore it is that I am anxious you should be early in the busy world, and on the world's

track. I am only the ghost of this business—its substance vanished long ago : and when I die, its ghost will be laid. As it is clearly no inheritance for you then, I have thought it best to use for your advantage, almost the only fragment of the old connexion that stands by me, through long habit. Some people suppose me to be wealthy. I wish for your sake, they were right. But whatever I leave behind me, or whatever I can give you, you in such a house as Dombey's are in the road to use well and make the most of. Be diligent, try to like it, my dear boy, work for a steady independence, and be happy !”

“I'll do everything I can, uncle, to deserve your affection. Indeed I will,” said the boy, earnestly.

“I know it,” said Solomon. “I am sure of it,” and he applied himself to a second glass of the old Madeira, with increased relish. “As to the sea,” he pursued, “that's well enough in fiction, Wally, but it won't do in fact : it won't do at all. It's natural enough that you should think about it, associating it with all these familiar things ; but it won't do, it won't do.”

Solomon Gills rubbed his hands with an air of stealthy enjoyment, as he talked of the sea, though ; and looked on the seafaring objects about him with inexpressible complacency.

“Think of this wine for instance,” said old Sol, “which has been to the East Indies and back, I'm not able to say how often, and has been once round the world. Think of the pitch-dark nights, the roaring winds, and rolling seas :”

“The thunder, lightning, rain, hail, storms of all kinds,” said the boy.

“To be sure,” said Solomon,—“that this wine has passed through. Think what a straining and creaking of timbers, and masts : what a whistling and howling of the gale through ropes and rigging :”

“What a clambering aloft of men, vying with each other who shall lie out first upon the yards to furl the icy sails, while the ship rolls and pitches, like mad !” cried his nephew.

“Exactly so,” said Solomon : “has gone on, over the old casks that held this wine. Why, when the Charming Sally went down in the—”

“In the Baltic Sea, in the dead of night ; five-and-twenty minutes past twelve when the captain's watch stopped in his pocket ; he lying dead against the mainmast—on the fourteenth of February, seventeen forty-nine !” cried Walter with great animation.

“Ay, to be sure !” cried old Sol, “quite right ! Then, there were five hundred casks of such wine aboard ; and

all hands (except the first mate, first lieutenant, two seamen, and a lady, in a leaky boat), going to work to stave the casks, got drunk, and died drunk, singing 'Rule Britannia,' when she settled and went down, and ending with one awful scream in chorus."

"But when the George the Second drove ashore, uncle, on the coast of Cornwall, in a dismal gale two hours before daybreak, on the fourth of March, 'seventy-one, she had near two hundred horses aboard; and the horses breaking loose down below, early in the gale, and tearing to and fro, and trampling each other to death, made such noises, and set up such human cries, that the crew believing the ship to be full of devils, some of the best men, losing heart and head, went overboard in despair, and only two were left alive, at last, to tell the tale."

"And when," said old Sol, "when the Polyphemus—"

"Private West India Trader, burden three hundred and fifty tons, Captain, John Brown of Deptford. Owners, Wiggs and Co.," cried Walter.

"The same," said Sol; "when she took fire, four days' sail with a fair wind out of Jamaica Harbour, in the night—"

"There were two brothers on board," interposed his nephew, speaking very fast and loud, "and there not being room for both of them in the only boat that wasn't swamped, neither of them would consent to go, until the elder took the younger by the waist, and flung him in. And then the younger, rising in the boat, cried out, 'Dear Edward, think of your promised wife at home. I'm only a boy. No one waits at home for me. Leap down into my place!' and flung himself in the sea!"

The kindling eye and heightened colour of the boy, who had risen from his seat in the earnestness of what he said and felt, seemed to remind old Sol of something he had forgotten, or that his encircling mist had hitherto shut out. Instead of proceeding with any more anecdotes, as he had evidently intended but a moment before, he gave a short dry cough, and said, "Well! suppose we change the subject."

The truth was, that the simple-minded uncle in his secret attraction towards the marvellous and adventurous—of which he was, in some sort, a distant relation, by his trade—had greatly encouraged the same attraction in the nephew; and that everything that had ever been put before the boy to deter him from a life of adventure, had had the usual unaccountable effect of sharpening his taste for it. This is invariable. It would seem as if there never was a book written, or a story told, expressly with the object of keeping boys on shore, which did not lure and charm them to the ocean, as a matter of course.

But an addition to the little party now made its appearance, in the shape of a gentleman in a wide suit of blue, with a hook instead of a hand attached to his right wrist; very bushy black eyebrows; and a thick stick in his left hand, covered all over (like his nose) with knobs. He wore a loose black silk handkerchief round his neck, and such a very large coarse shirt collar, that it looked like a small sail. He was evidently the person for whom the spare wine-glass was intended, and evidently knew it; for having taken off his rough outer coat, and hung up, on a particular peg behind the door, such a hard glazed hat as a sympathetic person's head might ache at the sight of, and which left a red rim round his own forehead as if he had been wearing a tight basin, he brought a chair to where the clean glass was, and sat himself down behind it. He was usually addressed as Captain, this visitor; and had been a pilot, or a skipper, or a privateersman, or all three perhaps, and was a very salt-looking man indeed.

His face, remarkable for a brown solidity, brightened as he shook hands with uncle and nephew; but he seemed to be of a laconic disposition, and merely said:

"How goes it?"

"All well," said Mr. Gills, pushing the bottle towards him.

He took it up, and having surveyed and smelt it, said with extraordinary expression:

"*The?*"

"*The,*" returned the Instrument-maker.

Upon that he whistled as he filled his glass, and seemed to think they were making holiday indeed.

"Wal'r!" he said, arranging his hair (which was thin) with his hook, and then pointing it at the Instrument-maker. "Look at him! Love! Honour! And Obey! Overhaul your catechism till you find that passage, and when found turn the leaf down. Success my boy!"

He was so perfectly satisfied both with his quotation and his reference to it, that he could not help repeating the words again in a low voice, and saying he had forgotten 'em these forty year.

"But I never wanted two or three words in my life that I didn't know where to lay my hand upon 'em, Gills," he observed. "It comes of not wasting language as some do."

The reflection perhaps reminded him that he had better, like young Norval's father, "increase his store." At any rate he became silent, and remained so until old Sol went out into the shop to light it up, when he turned to Walter, and said, without any introductory remark:

"I suppose he could make a clock if he tried?"

"I shouldn't wonder, Captain Cuttle," returned the boy.

"And it would go!" said Captain Cuttle, making a species of serpent in the air with his hook. "Lord, how that clock would go!"

For a moment or two he seemed quite lost in contemplating the pace of this ideal timepiece, and sat looking at the boy as if his face were the dial.

"But he's chockfull of science," he observed, waving his hook towards the stock-in-trade. "Look 'ye here! Here's a collection of 'em. Earth, air, or water. It's all one. Only say where you'll have it. Up in a balloon? There you are. Down in a bell? There you are. D'ye want to put the North Star in a pair of scales, and weigh it? He'll do it for you."

It may be gathered from these remarks that Captain Cuttle's reverence for the stock of instruments was profound, and that his philosophy knew little or no distinction between trading in it and inventing it.

"Ah!" he said, with a sigh, "it's a fine thing to understand 'em. And yet it's a fine thing not to understand 'em. I hardly know which is best. It's so comfortable to sit here and feel that you might be weighed, measured, magnified, electrified, polarized, played the very devil with: and never know how."

Nothing short of the wonderful Madeira, combined with the occasion (which rendered it desirable to improve and expand Walter's mind), could have ever loosened his tongue to the extent of giving utterance to this prodigious oration. He seemed quite amazed himself at the manner in which it opened up to view the sources of the taciturn delight he had had in eating Sunday dinners in that parlour for ten years. Becoming a sadder and a wiser man he mused and held his peace.

"Come!" cried the subject of his admiration, returning. "Before you have your glass of grog, Ned, we must finish the bottle."

"Stand by!" said Ned, filling his glass. "Give the boy some more."

"No more, thank'e, uncle!"

"Yes, yes," said Sol, "a little more. We'll finish the bottle, to the House, Ned—Walter's house. Why it may be his house one of these days, in part. Who knows? Sir Richard Whittington married his master's daughter."

"Turn again Whittington, Lord Mayor of London, and when you are old you will never depart from it," interposed the Captain. "Wal'r! Overhaul the book, my lad."

"And although Mr. Dombey hasn't a daughter," Sol began.

"Yes, yes, he has, uncle," said the boy, reddening and laughing.

"Has he?" cried the old man. "Indeed I think he has too."

"Oh! I know he has," said the boy. "Some of 'em were talking about it in the office to-day. And they do say, uncle and Captain Cuttle," lowering his voice, "that he's taken a dislike to her, and that she's left unnoticed, among the servants, and that his mind's so set all the while upon having his son in the House, that although he's only a baby now he is going to have balances struck oftener than formerly, and the books kept closer than they used to be, and has even been seen (when he thought he wasn't) walking in the Docks looking at his ships and property and all that, as if he was exulting like, over what he and his son will possess together. That's what they say. Of course I don't know."

"He knows all about her already, you see," said the instrument-maker.

"Nonsense, uncle," cried the boy, still reddening and laughing, boy-like. "How can I help hearing what they tell me?"

"The son's a little in our way at present, I'm afraid, Ned," said the old man, humouring the joke.

"Very much," said the captain.

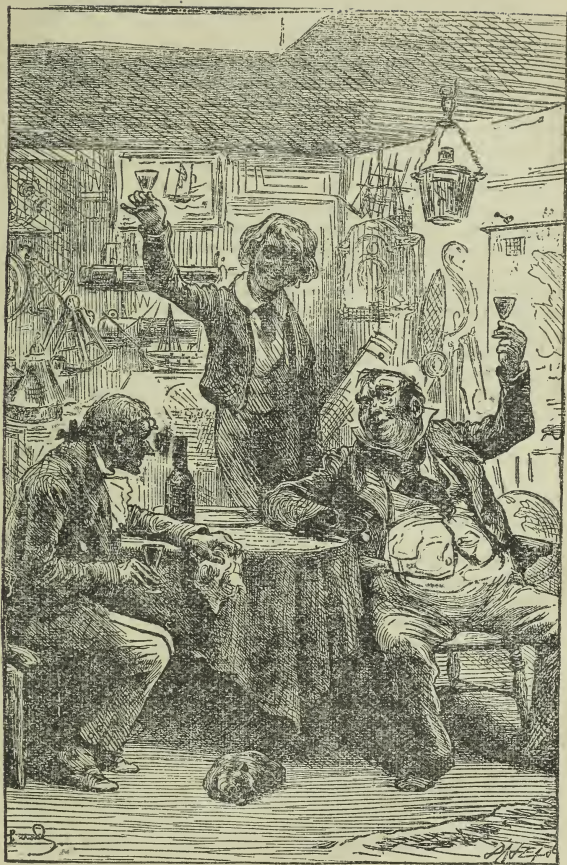
"Nevertheless, we'll drink him," pursued Sol. "So here's to Dombey and Son."

"Oh, very well, uncle," said the boy, merrily. "Since you have introduced the mention of her, and have connected me with her, and have said that I know all about her, I shall make bold to amend the toast. So here's to Dombey—and Son—and Daughter!"

CHAPTER V.

Paul's Progress and Christening.

LITTLE Paul, suffering no contamination from the blood of the Toodles, grew stouter and stronger every day. Every day, too, he was more and more ardently cherished by Miss Tox, whose devotion was so far appreciated by Mr. Dombey that he began to regard her as a woman of great natural good sense, whose feelings did her credit and deserved encouragement. He was so lavish of this condescension, that he not only bowed to her, in a particular manner, on several occasions, but even entrusted such stately recognitions of her to his sister as "pray tell your friend, Louisa, that she is very good," or "mention to Miss Tox, Louisa, that I am



“SO, HERE’S TO DOMBEY—AND SON—AND DAUGHTER.”

—Dombey and Son, Vol. Eleven, page 379.

obliged to her ;” specialities which made a deep impression on the lady thus distinguished.

Miss Tox was often in the habit of assuring Mrs. Chick, that “ nothing could exceed her interest in all connected with the development of that sweet child ;” and an observer of Miss Tox’s proceedings might have inferred so much without declaratory confirmation. She would preside over the innocent repasts of the young heir, with ineffable satisfaction, almost with an air of joint proprietorship with Richards in the entertainment. At the little ceremonies of the bath and toilette, she assisted with enthusiasm. The administration of infantine doses of physic awakened all the active sympathy of her character ; and being on one occasion secreted in a cupboard (whither she had fled in modesty), when Mr. Dombey was introduced into the nursery by his sister, to behold his son, in the course of preparation for bed, taking a short walk uphill over Richard’s gown, in a short and airy linen jacket, Miss Tox was so transported beyond the ignorant present as to be unable to refrain from crying out, “ Is he not beautiful, Mr. Dombey ! Is he not a Cupid, sir !” and then almost sinking behind the closet door with confusion and blushes.

“ Louisa,” said Mr. Dombey, one day, to his sister, “ I really think I must present your friend with some little token on the occasion of Paul’s christening. She has exerted herself so warmly in the child’s behalf from the first, and seems to understand her position so thoroughly (a very rare merit in this world, I am sorry to say), that it would really be agreeable to me to notice her.”

Let it be no detraction from the merits of Miss Tox, to hint that in Mr. Dombey’s eyes, as in some others that occasionally see the light, they only achieved that mighty piece of knowledge, the understanding of their own position, who showed a fitting reverence for his. It was not so much their merit that they knew themselves, as that they knew him, and bowed low before him.

“ My dear Paul,” returned his sister, “ you do Miss Tox but justice, as a man of your penetration was sure, I knew, to do. I believe if there are three words in the English language for which she has a respect amounting almost to veneration, those words are, Dombey and Son.”

“ Well,” said Mr. Dombey, “ I believe it. It does Miss Tox credit.”

“ And as to anything in the shape of a token, my dear Paul,” pursued his sister, “ all I can say is that anything you give Miss Tox will be hoarded and prized, I am sure, like a relic. But there *is* a way, my dear Paul, of showing your sense of Miss Tox’s friendliness in a still more flat-

tering and acceptable manner, if you should be so inclined."

"How is that?" asked Mr. Dombey.

"Godfathers, of course," continued Mrs. Chick, "are important in point of connexion and influence."

"I don't know why they should be, to my son," said Mr. Dombey coldly.

"Very true, my dear Paul," retorted Mrs. Chick, with an extraordinary show of animation, to cover the suddenness of her conversion; "and spoken like yourself. I might have expected nothing else from you. I might have known that such would have been your opinion. Perhaps;" here Mrs. Chick flattered again, as not quite comfortably feeling her way; "perhaps that is a reason why you might have the less objection to allowing Miss Tox to be godmother to the dear thing, if it were only as deputy and proxy for some one else. That it would be received as a great honour and distinction, Paul, I need not say."

"Louisa," said Mr. Dombey, after a short pause, "it is not to be supposed—"

"Certainly not," cried Mrs. Chick, hastening to anticipate a refusal, "I never thought it was."

Mr. Dombey looked at her impatiently.

"Don't flurry me, my dear Paul," said his sister; "for that destroys me. I am far from strong. I have not been quite myself, since poor dear Fanny departed."

Mr. Dombey glanced at the pocket-handkerchief which his sister applied to her eyes, and resumed:

"It is not to be supposed, I say—"

"And I say," murmured Mrs. Chick, "that I never thought it was."

"Good Heaven, Louisa!" said Mr. Dombey.

"No, my dear Paul," she remonstrated with tearful dignity, "I must really be allowed to speak. I am not so clever, or so reasoning, or so eloquent, or so anything, as you are. I know that very well. So much the worse for me. But if they were the last words I had to utter—and last words should be very solemn to you and me, Paul, after poor dear Fanny—I should still say I never thought it was. And what is more," added Mrs. Chick with increased dignity, as if she had withheld her crushing argument until now, "I never *did* think it was."

Mr. Dombey walked to the window and back again.

"It is not to be supposed, Louisa," he said (Mrs. Chick had nailed her colours to the mast, and repeated, "I know it isn't," but he took no notice of it), "but that there are many persons who, supposing that I recognized any claim at all in such a case, have a claim upon me superior to Miss Tox's. But I do not. I recognize no such thing. Paul and myself will be able, when the time comes, to

hold our own—the house, in other words, will be able to hold its own, and maintain its own, and hand down its own of itself, and without any such common-place aids. The kind of foreign help which people usually seek for their children, I can afford to despise; being above it, I hope. So that Paul's infancy and childhood pass away well, and I see him becoming qualified without waste of time for the career on which he is destined to enter, I am satisfied. He will make what powerful friends he pleases in after-life, when he is actively maintaining—and extending, if that is possible—the dignity and credit of the Firm. Until then, I am enough for him, perhaps, and all in all. I have no wish that people should step in between us. I would much rather show my sense of the obliging conduct of a deserving person like your friend. Therefore let it be so; and your husband and myself will do well enough for the other sponsors, I dare say."

In the course of these remarks, delivered with great majesty and grandeur, Mr. Dombey had truly revealed the secret feelings of his breast. An indescribable distrust of anybody stepping in between himself and his son; a haughty dread of having any rival or partner in the boy's respect and deference; a sharp misgiving, recently acquired, that he was not infallible in his power of bending and binding human wills; as sharp a jealousy of any second check or cross; these were, at that time, the master keys of his soul. In all his life he had never made a friend. His cold and distant nature had neither sought one, nor found one. And now when that nature concentrated its whole force so strongly on a partial scheme of parental interest and ambition, it seemed as if its icy current, instead of being released by this influence, and running clear and free, had thawed for but an instant to admit its burden, and then frozen with it into one unyielding block.

Elevated thus to the godmothership of little Paul, in virtue of her insignificance, Miss Tox was from that hour chosen and appointed to office; and Mr. Dombey further signified his pleasure that the ceremony, already long delayed, should take place without further postponement. His sister, who had been far from anticipating so signal a success, withdrew as soon as she could, to communicate it to her best of friends; and Mr. Dombey was left alone in his library.

There was anything but solitude in the nursery; for there, Mrs. Chick and Miss Tox were enjoying a social evening, so much to the disgust of Miss Susan Nipper that that young lady embraced every opportunity of making wry faces behind the door. Her feelings were so much excited on the occasion, that she found it indispensable to afford them this relief, even without

having the comfort of any audience or sympathy whatever. As the knight-errants of old relieved their minds by carving their mistress's names in deserts and wildernesses, and other savage places where there was no probability of there ever being anybody to read them, so did Miss Susan Nipper curl her snub nose into drawers and wardrobes, put away winks of disparagement in cupboards, shed derisive squints into stone pitchers, and contradict and call names out in the passage.

The two interlopers, however, blissfully unconscious of the young lady's sentiments, saw little Paul safe through all the stages of undressing, airy exercise, supper and bed; and then sat down to tea before the fire. The two children now lay, through the good offices of Polly, in one room; and it was not until the ladies were established at their tea-table that happening to look towards the little beds, they thought of Florence.

"How sound she sleeps!" said Miss Tox.

"Why, you know my dear, she takes a great deal of exercise in the course of the day," returned Mrs. Chick, "playing about little Paul so much."

"She is a curious child," said Miss Tox.

"My dear," retorted Mrs. Chick, in a low voice: "Her mama, all over!"

"In-deed!" said Miss Tox. "Ah dear me!"

A tone of most extraordinary compassion Miss Tox said it in, though she had no distinct idea why, except that it was expected of her.

"Florence will never, never, never, be a Dombey," said Mrs. Chick, "not if she lives to be a thousand years old."

Miss Tox elevated her eyebrows, and was again full of commiseration.

"I quite fret and worry myself about her," said Mrs. Chick, with a sigh of modest merit. "I really don't see what is to become of her when she grows older, or what position she is to take. She don't gain on her papa in the least. How can one expect she should, when she is so very unlike a Dombey?"

Miss Tox looked as if she saw no way out of such a cogent argument as that at all.

"And the child, you see," said Mrs. Chick, in deep confidence, "has poor Fanny's nature. She'll never make an effort in after-life, I'll venture to say. Never! She'll never wind and twine herself about her papa's heart like—"

"Like the ivy?" suggested Miss Tox.

"Like the ivy," Mrs. Chick assented. "Never! She'll never glide and nestle into the bosom of her papa's affections like—the—"

"Startled fawn?" suggested Miss Tox.

"Like the startled fawn," said Mrs. Chick. "Never! Poor Fanny! Yet how I loved her!"

"You must not distress yourself, my dear," said Miss Tox, in a soothing voice. "Now, really! You have too much feeling."

"We have all our faults," said Mrs. Chick, weeping and shaking her head. "I dare say we have. I never was blind to hers. I never said I was. Far from it. Yet how I loved her!"

What a satisfaction it was to Mrs. Chick—a commonplace piece of folly enough, compared with whom her sister-in-law had been a very angel of womanly intelligence and gentleness—to patronise and be tender to the memory of that lady: in exact pursuance of her conduct to her in her life-time; and to thoroughly believe herself, and take herself in, and make herself uncommonly comfortable on the strength of her toleration! What a mighty pleasant virtue toleration should be when we are right, to be so very pleasant when we are wrong, and quite unable to demonstrate how we come to be invested with the privilege of exercising it!

Mrs. Chick was yet drying her eyes and shaking her head, when Richards made bold to caution her that Miss Florence was awake and sitting in her bed. She had risen, as the nurse said, and the lashes of her eyes were wet with tears. But no one saw them glistening save Polly. No one else leant over her, and whispered soothing words to her, or was near enough to hear the flutter of her beating heart.

"Oh! dear nurse!" said the child, looking earnestly up in her face, "let me lie by my brother!"

"Why, my pet?" said Richards.

"Oh! I think he loves me," cried the child wildly. "Let me lie by him. Pray do!"

Mrs. Chick interposed with some motherly words about going to sleep like a dear, but Florence repeated her supplication, with a frightened look, and in a voice broken by sobs and tears.

"I'll not wake him," she said, covering her face and hanging down her head. "I'll only touch him with my hand, and go to sleep. Oh, pray, pray, let me lie by my brother, to-night, for I believe he is fond of me!"

Richards took her without a word, and carrying her to the little bed in which the infant was sleeping, laid her down by his side. She crept as near as she could without disturbing his rest; and stretching out one arm so that it timidly embraced his neck, and hiding her face on the other, over which her damp and scattered hair fell loose, lay motionless

"Poor little thing," said Miss Tox; "she has been dreaming, I dare say."

This trivial incident had so interrupted the current of conversation, that it was difficult of resumption; and Mrs. Chick moreover had been so affected by the contemplation of her own tolerant nature, that she was not in spirits. The two friends accordingly soon made an end of their tea, and a servant was despatched to fetch a hackney cabriolet for Miss Tox. Miss Tox had great experience in hackney cabs, and her starting in one was generally a work of time, as she was systematic in the preparatory arrangements.

"Have the goodness, if you please, Towlinson," said Miss Tox, "first of all to carry out a pen and ink and take his number legibly."

"Yes, miss," said Towlinson.

"Then if you please, Towlinson," said Miss Tox, "have the goodness to turn the cushion. Which," said Miss Tox apart to Mrs. Chick, "is generally damp, my dear."

"Yes, miss," said Towlinson.

"I'll trouble you also, if you please," said Miss Tox, "with this card and this shilling. He's to drive to the card, and is to understand that he will not on any account have more than the shilling."

"No, miss," said Towlinson.

"And—I'm sorry to give you so much trouble, Towlinson,"—said Miss Tox, looking at him pensively.

"Not at all, miss," said Towlinson.

"Mention to the man, then, if you please, Towlinson," said Miss Tox, "that the lady's uncle is a magistrate, and that if he gives her any of his impertinence he will be punished terribly. You can pretend to say that, if you please, Towlinson, in a friendly way, and because you know it was done to another man, who died."

"Certainly, miss," said Towlinson.

"And now good night to my sweet, sweet, sweet, godson," said Miss Tox, with a soft shower of kisses at each repetition of the adjective; "and Louisa, my dear friend, promise me to take a little something warm before you go to bed, and not to distress yourself!"

It was with extreme difficulty that Nipper, the black-eyed, who looked on steadfastly, contained herself at this crisis, and, until the subsequent departure of Mrs. Chick. But the nursery being at length free of visitors, she made herself some recompense for her late restraint.

"You might keep me in a strait waistcoat for six weeks," said Nipper, "and when I got it off I'd only be more aggravated, who ever heard the like of them two Griffins, Mrs. Richards?"

“And then to talk of having been dreaming, poor dear!” said Polly.

“Oh you beauties!” cried Susan Nipper, affecting to salute the door by which the ladies had departed. “Never be a Dombey, won’t she, it’s to be hoped she won’t, we don’t want any more such, one’s enough.”

“Don’t wake the children, Susan dear,” said Polly.

“I’m very much beholden to you, Mrs. Richards,” said Susan, who was not by any means discriminating in her wrath, “and really feel it as a honour to receive your commands, being a black slave and a mulotter. Mrs. Richards, if there’s any other orders you can give me, pray mention ’em.”

“Nonsense; orders,” said Polly.

“Oh! bless your heart, Mrs. Richards,” cried Susan, “temporaries always orders permanencies here, didn’t you know that, why wherever was you born, Mrs. Richards? But wherever you was born, Mrs. Richards,” pursued Spitfire, shaking her head resolutely, “and whenever, and however (which is best known to yourself), you may bear in mind, please, that it’s one thing to give orders, and quite another thing to take ’em. A person may tell another person to dive off a bridge head foremost into five-and-forty feet of water, Mrs. Richards, but a person may be very far from diving.”

“There now,” said Polly, “you’re angry because you’re a good little thing, and fond of Miss Florence; and yet you turn round on me, because there’s nobody else.”

“It’s very easy for some to keep their tempers, and be soft-spoken, Mrs. Richards,” returned Susan, slightly mollified, “when their child’s made as much of as a prince, and is petted and patted till it wishes its friends further, but when a sweet young pretty innocent, that never ought to have a cross word spoken to or of it, is run down, the case is very difficult indeed. My goodness gracious me, Miss. Floy, you naughty, sinful child, if you don’t shut your eyes this minute, I’ll call in them hob-goblins that lives in the cock-loft to come and eat you up alive!”

Here Miss Nipper made a horrible howling, supposed to issue from a conscientious goblin of the bull species, impatient to discharge the severe duty of his position. Having further composed her young charge by covering her head with the bed-clothes, and making three or four angry dabs at the pillow, she folded her arms, and screwed up her mouth, and sat looking at the fire for the rest of the evening.

Though little Paul was said, in nursery phrase, “to take a deal of notice for his age,” he took as little notice of all this as of the preparations for his christening on

the next day but one ; which nevertheless went on about him, as to his personal apparel, and that of his sister and the two nurses, with great activity. Neither did he, on the arrival of the appointed morning, show any sense of its importance ; being, on the contrary, unusually inclined to sleep, and unusually inclined to take it ill in his attendants that they dressed him to go out.

It happened to be an iron-grey autumnal day, with a shrewd east wind blowing—a day in keeping with the proceedings. Mr. Dombey represented in himself the wind, the shade, and the autumn of the christening. He stood in his library to receive the company, as hard and cold as the weather ; and when he looked out through the glass room, at the trees in the little garden, their brown and yellow leaves came fluttering down, as if he blighted them.

Ugh ! They were black, cold rooms ; and seemed to be in mourning, like the inmates of the house. The books precisely matched as to size, and drawn up in line, like soldiers, looked in their cold, hard, slippery uniforms, as if they had but one idea among them, and that was a freezer. The bookcase, glazed, and locked, repudiated all familiarities. Mr. Pitt, in bronze on the top, with no trace of his celestial origin about him, guarded the unattainable treasure like an enchanted Moor. A dusty urn at each high corner, dug up from an ancient tomb, preached desolation and decay as from two pulpits ; and the chimney-glass, reflecting Mr. Dombey and his portrait at one blow, seemed fraught with melancholy meditations.

The stiff and stark fire-irons appeared to claim a nearer relationship than anything else there to Mr. Dombey, with his buttoned coat, his white cravat, his heavy gold watch-chain, and his creaking boots. But this was before the arrival of Mr. and Mrs. Chick, his lawful relatives, who soon presented themselves.

“ My dear Paul,” Mrs. Chick murmured, as she embraced him, “ the beginning, I hope, of many joyful days ! ”

“ Thank you, Louisa,” said Mr. Dombey, grimly. “ How do you do, Mr. John ? ”

“ How do you do, sir,” said Chick.

He gave Mr. Dombey his hand, as if he feared it might electrify him. Mr. Dombey took it as if it were a fish, or seaweed, or some such clammy substance, and immediately returned it to him with exalted politeness.

“ Perhaps, Louisa,” said Mr. Dombey, slightly turning his head in his cravat, as if it were a socket, “ you would have preferred a fire ? ”

“ Oh, my dear Paul, no,” said Mrs. Chick, who had

much ado to keep her teeth from chattering ; “ not for me.”

“ Mr. John,” said Mr. Dombey, “ you are not sensible of any chill ? ”

Mr. John, who had already got both his hands in his pockets over the wrists, and was on the very threshold of that same canine chorus which had given Mrs. Chick so much offence on a former occasion, protested that he was perfectly comfortable.

He added in a low voice, “ With my tiddle tol toor rul ”—when he was providentially stopped by Towlinson, who announced :

“ Miss Tox ! ”

And enter that fair enslaver, with a blue nose and indescribably frosty face, referable to her being very thinly clad in a maze of fluttering odds and ends, to do honour to the ceremony.

“ How do you do, Miss Tox ? ” said Mr. Dombey.

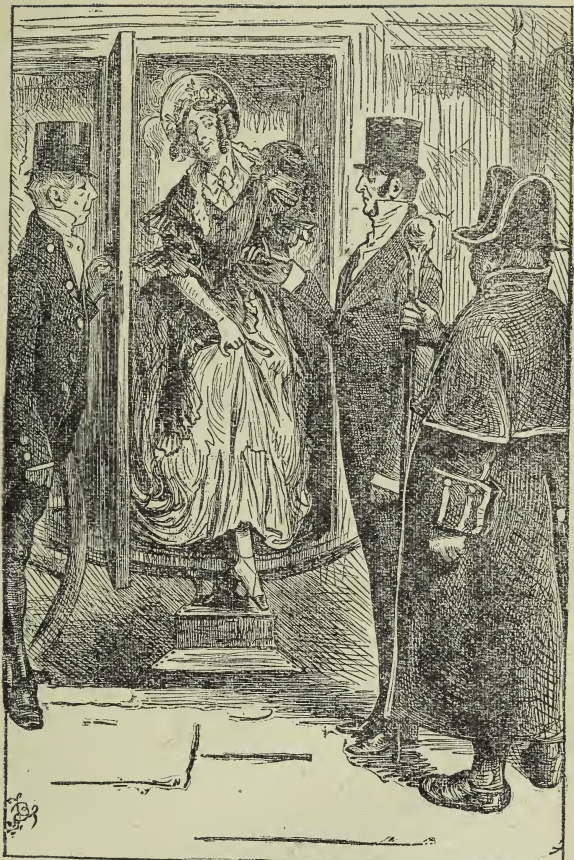
Miss Tox in the midst of her spreading gauzes, went down altogether like an opera-glass shutting up ; she curtseyed so low, in acknowledgment of Mr. Dombey’s advancing a step or two to meet her.

“ I can never forget this occasion, sir,” said Miss Tox, softly. “ ’Tis impossible. My dear Louisa, I can hardly believe the evidence of my senses.”

If Miss Tox could believe the evidence of one of her senses, it was a very cold day. That was quite clear. She took an early opportunity of promoting the circulation in the tip of her nose by secretly chafing it with her pocket-handkerchief, lest, by its very low temperature, it should disagreeably astonish the baby when she came to kiss it.

The baby soon appeared, carried in great glory by Richards ; while Florence, in custody of that active young constable, Susan Nipper, brought up the rear. Though the whole nursery party were dressed by this time in lighter mourning than at first, there was enough in the appearance of the bereaved children to make the day no brighter. The baby too—it might have been Miss Tox’s nose—began to cry. Thereby, as it happened, preventing Mr. Chick from the awkward fulfilment of a very honest purpose he had ; which was, to make much of Florence. For this gentleman, insensible to the superior claims of a perfect Dombey (perhaps on account of having the honour to be united to a Dombey himself, and being familiar with excellence), really liked her, and showed that he liked her, and was about to show it in his own way now, when Paul cried, and his helpmate stopped him short.

“ Now Florence child ! ” said her aunt, briskly, “ what



MR. DOMBEY DISMOUNTING FIRST TO HELP THE LADIES OUT.
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are you doing, love? Show yourself to him. Engage his attention, my dear !”

The atmosphere became, or might have become, colder and colder, when Mr. Dombey stood frigidly watching his little daughter, who, clapping her hands, and standing on tip-toe before the throne of his son and heir, lured him to bend down from his high estate, and look at her. Some honest act of Richards' may have aided the effect, but he did look down, and held his peace. As his sister hid behind her nurse, he followed her with his eyes ; and when she peeped out with a merry cry to him, he sprang up and crowed lustily—laughing outright when she ran in upon him ; and seeming to fondle her curls with his tiny hands, while she smothered him with kisses.

Was Mr. Dombey pleased to see this? He testified no pleasure by the relaxation of a nerve ; but outward tokens of any kind of feeling were unusual with him. If any sunbeam stole into the room to light the children at their play, it never reached his face. He looked on so fixedly and coldly, that the warm light vanished even from the laughing eyes of little Florence, when, at last, they happened to meet his.

It was a dull, grey, autumn day indeed, and in a minute's pause and silence that took place, the leaves fell sorrowfully.

“ Mr. John,” said Mr. Dombey, referring to his watch, and assuming his hat and gloves. “ Take my sister, if you please : my arm to-day is Miss Tox's. You had better go first with Master Paul, Richards. Be very careful.”

In Mr. Dombey's carriage, Dombey and Son, Miss Tox, Mrs. Chick, Richards, and Florence. In a little carriage following it, Susan Nipper and the owner Mr. Chick. Susan looking out of window, without intermission, as a relief from the embarrassment of confronting the large face of that gentleman, and thinking whenever anything rattled that he was putting up in paper an appropriate pecuniary compliment for herself.

Once upon the road to church, Mr. Dombey clapped his hands for the amusement of his son. At which instance of parental enthusiasm Miss Tox was enchanted. But exclusive of this incident, the chief difference between the christening party and a party in a mourning coach, consisted in the colours of the carriage and horses.

Arrived at the church steps, they were received by a portentous beadle. Mr. Dombey dismounting first to help the ladies out, and standing near him at the church door, looked like another beadle. A beadle less gorgeous, but more dreadful ; the beadle of private life ; the beadle of our business and our bosoms.

Miss Tox's hand trembled as she slipped it through Mr. Dombey's arm, and felt herself escorted up the steps, preceded by a cocked hat and a Babylonian collar. It seemed for a moment like that other solemn institution, "Wilt thou have this man, Lucretia?" "Yes, I will."

"Please to bring the child in quick out of the air there," whispered the beadle, holding open the inner door of the church.

Little Paul might have asked with Hamlet "into my grave?" so chill and earthy was the place. The tall shrouded pulpit and reading-desk; the dreary perspective of empty pews stretching away under the galleries, and empty benches mounting to the roof and lost in the shadow of the great grim organ; the dusty matting and cold stone slabs; the grisly free seats in the aisles; and the damp corner by the bell-rope, where the black tressels used for funerals were stowed away, along with some shovels and baskets, and a coil or two of deadly-looking rope; the strange, unusual, uncomfortable smell, and the cadaverous light; were all in unison. It was a cold and dismal scene.

"There's a wedding just on, sir," said the beadle, "but it'll be over directly, if you'll walk into the vestry here."

Before he turned again to lead the way, he gave Mr. Dombey a bow and a half smile of recognition, importing that he (the beadle) remembered to have had the pleasure of attending on him when he buried his wife, and hoped he had enjoyed himself since.

The very wedding looked dismal as they passed in front of the altar. The bride was too old and the bridegroom too young, and a superannuated beau with one eye and an eye-glass stuck in its blank companion, was giving away the lady, while the friends were shivering. In the vestry the fire was smoking; and an over-aged and over-worked and under-paid attorney's clerk, "making a search," was running his fore-finger down the parchment pages of an immense register (one of a long series of similar volumes) gorged with burials. Over the fireplace was a ground-plan of the vaults underneath the church; and Mr. Chick, skimming the literary portion of it aloud, by way of enlivening the company, read the reference to Mrs. Dombey's tomb in full, before he could stop himself.

After another cold interval, a wheezy little pew-opener afflicted with an asthma, appropriate to the church-yard, if not to the church, summoned them to the font. Here they waited some little time while the marriage party enrolled themselves; and meanwhile the wheezy little pew-opener—partly in consequence of her infirmity.

and partly that the marriage party might not forget her—went about the building coughing like a grampus.

Presently the clerk (the only cheerful-looking object there, and *he* was an undertaker) came up with a jug of warm water, and said something, as he poured it into the font, about taking the chill off; which millions of gallons boiling hot could not have done for the occasion. Then the clergyman, an amiable and mild-looking young curate, but obviously afraid of the baby, appeared like the principal character in a ghost-story, "a tall figure all in white;" at sight of whom Paul rent the air with his cries, and never left off again till he was taken out black in the face.

Even when that event had happened, to the great relief of everybody, he was heard under the portico, during the rest of the ceremony, now fainter, now louder, now hushed, now bursting forth again with an irrepressible sense of his wrongs. This so distracted the attention of the two ladies, that Mrs. Chick was constantly deploying into the centre aisle, to send out messages by the pew-opener, while Miss Tox kept her prayer-book open at the Gunpowder Plot, and occasionally read responses from that service.

During the whole of these proceedings, Mr. Dombey remained as impassive and gentlemanly as ever, and perhaps assisted in making it so cold, that the young curate smoked at the mouth as he read. The only time that he unbent his visage in the least, was when the clergyman, in delivering (very unaffectedly and simply) the closing exhortation, relative to the future examination of the child by the sponsors, happened to rest his eye on Mr. Chick; and then Mr. Dombey might have been seen to express by a majestic look, that he would like to catch him at it.

It might have been well for Mr. Dombey, if he had thought of his own dignity a little less; and had thought of the great origin and purpose of the ceremony in which he took so formal and so stiff a part, a little more. His arrogance contrasted strangely with its history.

When it was all over he again gave his arm to Miss Tox, and conducted her to the vestry, where he informed the clergyman how much pleasure it would have given him to have solicited the honour of his company at dinner, but for the unfortunate state of his household affairs. The register signed, and the fees paid, and the pew-opener (whose cough was very bad again) remembered, and the beadle gratified, and the sexton (who was accidentally on the door-steps, looking with great interest at the weather) not forgotten, they got into the carriage again, and drove home in the same bleak fellowship.

There they found Mr. Pitt turning up his nose at a cold collation, set forth in a cold pomp of glass and silver, and looking more like a dead dinner lying in state than a social refreshment. On their arrival, Miss Tox produced a mug for her godson, and Mr. Chick a knife and fork and spoon in a case. Mr. Dombey also produced a bracelet for Miss Tox; and, on the receipt of this token, Miss Tox was tenderly affected.

"Mr. John," said Mr. Dombey, "will you take the bottom of the table, if you please. What have you got there, Mr. John?"

"I have got a cold fillet of veal here, sir," replied Mr. Chick, rubbing his numbed hands hard together. "What have *you* got there, sir?"

"This," returned Mr. Dombey, "is some cold preparation of calf's head, I think. I see cold fowls—ham—patties—salad—lobster. Miss Tox will do me the honour of taking some wine? Champagne to Miss Tox."

There was a toothache in everything. The wine was so bitter cold that it forced a little scream from Miss Tox, which she had great difficulty in turning into a "Hem!" The veal had come from such an airy pantry, that the first taste of it had struck a sensation as of cold lead to Mr. Chick's extremities. Mr. Dombey alone remained unmoved. He might have been hung up for sale at a Russian fair as a specimen of a frozen gentleman.

The prevailing influence was too much even for his sister. She made no effort at flattery or small-talk, and directed all her efforts to looking as warm as she could.

"Well, sir," said Mr. Chick, making a desperate plunge, after a long silence, and filling a glass of sherry; "I shall drink this, if you'll allow me, sir, to little Paul."

"Bless him!" murmured Miss Tox, taking a sip of wine.

"Dear little Dombey!" murmured Mrs. Chick.

"Mr. John," said Mr. Dombey, with severe gravity, "my son would feel and express himself obliged to you, I have no doubt, if he could appreciate the favour you have done him. He will prove, in time to come, I trust, equal to any responsibility that the obliging disposition of his relations and friends, in private, or the onerous nature of our position, in public, may impose upon him."

The tone in which this was said admitting of nothing more, Mr. Chick relapsed into low spirits and silence. Not so Miss Tox, who, having listened to Mr. Dombey with even a more emphatic attention than usual, and with a more expressive tendency of her head to one side, now leant across the table, and said to Mrs. Chick softly:

“Louisa !”

“My dear,” said Mrs. Chick.

“Onerous nature of our position in public may—I have forgotten the exact term.”

“Expose him to,” said Mrs. Chick.

“Pardon me, my dear,” returned Miss Tox, “I think not. It was more rounded and flowing. Obliging disposition of relations and friends in private, or onerous nature of position in public—may—impose upon him?”

“Impose upon him, to be sure,” said Mrs. Chick.

Miss Tox struck her delicate hands together lightly, in triumph ; and added, casting up her eyes, “eloquence indeed !”

Mr. Dombey, in the meanwhile, had issued orders for the attendance of Richards, who now entered courtesying, but without the baby ; Paul being asleep after the fatigues of the morning. Mr. Dombey, having delivered a glass of wine to this vassal, addressed her in the following words : Miss Tox previously settling her head on one side, and making other little arrangements for engraving them on her heart.

“During the six months or so, Richards, which have seen you an inmate of this house, you have done your duty. Desiring to connect some little service to you with this occasion, I considered how I could best effect that object, and I also advised with my sister Mrs.—”

“Chick,” interposed the gentleman of that name.

“Oh, hush if you *please* !” said Miss Tox.

“I was about to say to you, Richards,” resumed Mr. Dombey, with an appalling glance at John, “that I was further assisted in my decision, by the recollection of a conversation I held with your husband in this room, on the occasion of your being hired, when he disclosed to me the melancholy fact that your family, himself at the head, were sunk and steeped in ignorance.”

Richards quailed under the magnificence of the reproof.

“I am far from being friendly,” pursued Mr. Dombey, “to what is called by persons of levelling sentiments, general education. But it is necessary that the inferior classes should continue to be taught to know their position, and to conduct themselves properly. So far I approve of schools. Having the power of nominating a child on the foundation of an ancient establishment, called (from a worshipful company) the Charitable Grinders ; where not only is a wholesome education bestowed upon the scholars, but where a dress and badge is likewise provided for them ; I have (first communicating, through Mrs. Chick, with your family) nominated your eldest son to an existing vacancy ; and he has this day, I am informed, assumed the habit. The num-

ber of her son, I believe," said Mr. Dombey, turning to his sister and speaking of the child as if he were a hackney-coach, "is one hundred and forty-seven. Louisa, you can tell her."

"One hundred and forty-seven," said Mrs. Chick. "The dress, Richards, is a nice, warm, blue baize tailed coat and cap, turned up with orange-coloured binding; red worsted stockings; and very strong leather small-clothes. One might wear the articles one's-self," said Mrs. Chick, with enthusiasm, "and be grateful."

"There, Richards!" said Miss Tox. "Now, indeed, you *may* be proud. The Charitable Grinders!"

"I am sure I am very much obliged, sir," returned Richards faintly, "and take it very kind that you should remember my little ones." At the same time a vision of Biler as a Charitable Grinder, with his very small legs encased in the serviceable clothing described by Mrs. Chick, swam before Richards' eyes, and made them water.

"I am very glad to see you have so much feeling, Richards," said Miss Tox.

"It makes one almost hope, it really does," said Mrs. Chick, who prided herself on taking trustful views of human nature, "that there may yet be some faint spark of gratitude and right feeling in the world."

Richards deferred to these compliments by curtsying and murmuring her thanks; but finding it quite impossible to recover her spirits from the disorder into which they had been thrown by the image of her son in his precocious nether garments, she gradually approached the door and was heartily relieved to escape by it.

Such temporary indications of a partial thaw that had appeared with her, vanished with her; and the frost set in again, as cold and hard as ever. Mr. Chick was twice heard to hum a tune at the bottom of the table, but on both occasions it was a fragment of the Dead March in Saul. The party seemed to get colder and colder, and to be gradually resolving itself into a congealed and solid state, like the collation round which it was assembled. At length Mrs. Chick looked at Miss Tox, and Miss Tox returned the look, and they both rose and said it was really time to go. Mr. Dombey receiving this announcement with perfect equanimity, they took leave of that gentleman, and presently departed under the protection of Mr. Chick; who, when they had turned their backs upon the house and left its master in his usual solitary state, put his hands in his pockets, threw himself back in the carriage, and whistled "With a hey ho chevy!" all through; conveying into his face as he did so, an expression of such gloomy and terrible defiance, that Mrs. Chick dared not protest, or in any way molest him.

Richards, though she had little Paul on her lap, could not forget her own first-born. She felt it was ungrateful; but the influence of the day fell even on the Charitable Grinders, and she could hardly help regarding his pewter badge, number one hundred and forty-seven, as, somehow, a part of its formality and sternness. She spoke, too, in the nursery, of his "blessed legs," and was again troubled by his spectre in uniform.

"I don't know what I wouldn't give," said Polly, "to see the poor little dear before he gets used to 'em."

"Why, then, I tell you what, Mrs. Richards," retorted Nipper, who had been admitted to her confidence, "see him and make your mind easy."

"Mr. Dombey wouldn't like it," said Polly.

"Oh wouldn't he, Mrs. Richards!" retorted Nipper, "he'd like it very much, I think, when he was asked."

"You wouldn't ask him, I suppose, at all?" said Polly.

"No, Mrs. Richards, quite contrary," returned Susan, "and them two inspectors Tox and Chick, not intending to be on duty to-morrow, as I heard 'em say, me and Miss Floy will go along with you to-morrow morning, and welcome, Mrs. Richards, if you like, for we may as well walk there as up and down a street, and better too."

Polly rejected the idea pretty stoutly at first; but by little and little she began to entertain it, as she entertained more and more distinctly the forbidden pictures of her children, and her own home. At length, arguing that there could be no great harm in calling for a moment at the door, she yielded to the Nipper proposition.

The matter being settled thus, little Paul began to cry most piteously, as if he had a foreboding that no good would come of it.

"What's the matter with the child?" asked Susan.

"He's cold, I think," said Polly, walking with him to and fro, and hushing him.

It was a bleak autumnal afternoon indeed; and as she walked, and hushed, and, glancing through the dreary windows, pressed the little fellow closer to her breast, the withered leaves came showering down.

CHAPTER VI.

Paul's Second Deprivation.

POLLY was beset by so many misgivings in the morning, that but for the incessant promptings of her black-eyed companion, she would have abandoned all thoughts

of the expedition, and formally petitioned for leave to see number one hundred and forty-seven under the awful shadow of Mr. Dombey's roof. But Susan who was personally disposed in favour of the excursion, and who (like Tony Lumpkin), if she could bear the disappointments of other people with tolerable fortitude, could not abide to disappoint herself, threw so many ingenious doubts in the way of this second thought, and stimulated the original intention with so many ingenious arguments, that almost as soon as Mr. Dombey's stately back was turned, and that gentleman was pursuing his daily road toward the city, his unconscious son was on his way to Staggs's Gardens.

This euphonious locality was situated in a suburb, known by the inhabitants of Staggs's Gardens by the name of Camberling Town; a designation which the Strangers' Map of London, as printed (with a view to pleasant and commodious reference) on pocket-handkerchiefs, condenses, with some show of reason, into Camden Town. Hither the two nurses bent their steps, accompanied by their charges; Richards carrying Paul, of course, and Susan leading little Florence by the hand, and giving her such jerks and pokes from time to time, as she considered it wholesome to administer.

The first shock of a great earthquake had, just at that period, rent the whole neighbourhood to its centre. Traces of its course were visible on every side. Houses were knocked down; streets broken through and stopped; deep pits and trenches dug in the ground; enormous heaps of earth and clay thrown up; buildings that were undermined and shaking, propped by great beams of wood. Here, a chaos of carts, overthrown and jumbled together, lay topsy-turvy at the bottom of a steep unnatural hill: there, confused treasures of iron soaked and rusted in something that had accidentally become a pond. Everywhere were bridges that led nowhere; thoroughfares that were wholly impassable; Babel towers of chimneys, wanting half their height; temporary wooden houses and enclosures, in the most unlikely situation; carcasses of ragged tenements, and fragments of unfinished walls and arches, and piles of scaffolding, and wildernesses of bricks, and giant forms of cranes, and tripods straddling above nothing. There were a hundred thousand shapes and substances of incompleteness, wildly mingled out of their places, upside down, burrowing in the earth, aspiring in the air, mouldering in the water, and unintelligible as any dream. Hot springs and fiery eruptions, the usual attendants upon earthquakes, lent their contributions of confusion to the scene. Boiling water hissed and heaved within dilapidated walls; whence, also, the glare and roar of flames

came issuing forth ; and mounds of ashes blocked up rights of way, and wholly changed the law and custom of the neighbourhood.

In short, the yet unfinished and unopened railroad was in progress ; and from the very core of all this dire disorder, trailed smoothly away, upon its mighty course of civilisation and improvement.

But as yet, the neighbourhood was shy to own the Railroad. One or two bold speculators had projected streets ; and one had built a little, but had stopped among the mud and ashes to consider farther of it. A bran-new tavern, redolent of fresh mortar and size, and fronting nothing at all, had taken for its sign The Railway Arms ; but that might be rash enterprise—and then it hoped to sell drink to the workmen. So, the Excavators' House of Call had sprung up from a beer shop ; and the old-established Ham and Beef Shop had become the Railway Eating House, with a roast leg of pork daily, through interested motives of a similar immediate and popular description. Lodging-house keepers were favourable in like manner ; and for the like reasons were not to be trusted. The general belief was very slow. There were frowzy fields, and cow-houses, and dung-hills, and dustheaps, and ditches, and gardens, and summer-houses, and carpet-beating grounds, at the very door of the railway. Little tumuli of oyster shells in the oyster season, and of lobster shells in the lobster season, and of broken crockery and faded cabbage leaves in all seasons, encroached upon its high places. Posts and rails, and old cautions to trespassers, and backs of mean houses, and patches of wretched vegetation, stared it out of countenance. Nothing was the better for it, or thought of being so. If the miserable waste ground lying near it could have laughed, it would have laughed it to scorn, like many of the miserable neighbours.

Staggs's Gardens was uncommonly incredulous. It was a little row of houses, with little squalid patches of ground before them, fenced off with old doors, barrel staves, scraps of tarpaulin, and dead bushes ; with bottomless tin kettles and exhausted iron fenders, thrust into the gaps. Here, the Staggs's Gardeners trained scarlet beans, kept fowls and rabbits, erected rotten summer houses (one was an old boat), dried clothes, and smoked pipes. Some were of opinion that Staggs's Gardens derived its name from a deceased capitalist, one Mr. Staggs, who had built it for his delectation. Others, who had a natural taste for the country, held that it dated from those rural times when the antlered herd, under the familiar denomination of Staggses had resorted to its shady precincts. Be this as it may, Staggs's

Gardens was regarded by its population as a sacred grove not to be withered by railroads ; and so confident were they generally of its long outliving any such ridiculous inventions that the master chimney-sweeper at the corner, who was understood to take the lead in the local politics of the Gardens, had publicly declared that on the occasion of the railroad opening, if ever it did open, two of his boys should ascend the flues of his dwelling, with instructions to hail the failure with derisive jeers from the chimney pots.

To this unhallowed spot, the very name of which had hitherto been carefully concealed from Mr. Dombey by his sister, was little Paul now borne by Fate and Richards.

"That's my house, Susan," said Polly, pointing it out.

"Is it, indeed, Mrs. Richards," said Susan, condescendingly.

"And there's my sister Jemima at the door, I do declare ;" cried Polly, "with my own sweet precious baby in her arms !"

The sight added such an extensive pair of wings to Polly's impatience, that she set off down the Gardens at a run, and bouncing on Jemima, changed babies with her in a twinkling, to the utter astonishment of that young damsel, on whom the heir of the Dombey's seemed to have fallen from the clouds.

"Why, Polly !" cried Jemima. "You ! what a turn you *have* given me ! who'd have thought it ! come along in Polly ! How well you do look to be sure ! The children will go half wild to see you Polly, that they will."

That they did, if one might judge from the noise they made, and the way in which they dashed at Polly and dragged her to a low chair in the chimney corner, where her own honest apple face became immediately the centre of a bunch of smaller pippins, all laying their rosy cheeks close to it, and all evidently the growth of the same tree. As to Polly, she was full as noisy and vehement as the children ; and it was not until she was quite out of breath, and her hair was hanging all about her flushed face, and her new christening attire was very much dishevelled, that any pause took place in the confusion. Even then, the smallest Toodle but one remained in her lap, holding on tight with both arms round her neck, while the smallest Toodle but two mounted on the back of the chair, and made desperate efforts, with one leg in the air, to kiss her round the corner.

"Look ! there's a pretty little lady come to see you," said Polly ; "and see how quiet *she* is ! what a beautiful little lady, ain't she ?"

This reference to Florence, who had been standing by

the door not unobservant of what passed, directed the attention of the younger branches towards her ; and had likewise the happy effect of leading to the formal recognition of Miss Nipper, who was not quite free from a misgiving that she had been already slighted.

"Oh do come in and sit down a minute, Susan, please," said Polly. "This is my sister Jemima, this is. Jemima, I don't know what I should ever do with myself, if it wasn't for Susan Nipper ; I shouldn't be here now but for her."

"Oh do sit down Miss Nipper, if you please," quoth Jemima.

Susan took the extreme corner of a chair, with a stately and ceremonious aspect.

"I never was so glad to see anybody in all my life ; now really, I never was, Miss Nipper," said Jemima.

Susan relaxing, took a little more of the chair, and smiled graciously.

"Do untie your bonnet-strings and make yourself at home, Miss Nipper, please," entreated Jemima. "I am afraid it's a poorer place than you're used to ; but you'll make allowances, I'm sure."

The black-eyed was so softened by this deferential behaviour, that she caught up little Miss Toodle who was running past, and took her to Banbury Cross immediately.

"But where's my pretty boy?" said Polly. "My poor fellow ? I came all this way to see him in his new clothes."

"Ah what a pity !" cried Jemima. "He'll break his heart, when he hears his mother has been here. He's at school, Polly."

"Gone already !"

"Yes. He went for the first time yesterday, for fear he should lose any learning. But it's half-holiday, Polly : if you could only stop 'till he comes home—you and Miss Nipper, leastways," said Jemima, mindful in good time of the dignity of the black-eyed.

"And how does he look, Jemima, bless him !" faltered Polly.

"Well, really he don't look so bad as you'd suppose," returned Jemima.

"Ah !" said Polly, with emotion, "I knew his legs must be too short."

"His legs *is* short," returned Jemima ; "especially behind ; but they'll get longer, Polly, every day."

It was a slow, prospective kind of consolation ; but the cheerfulness and good nature with which it was administered, gave it a value it did not intrinsically possess. After a moment's silence, Polly asked, in a more sprightly manner :

“And where’s father, Jemima dear?”—for by the patriarchal appellation, Mr. Toodle was generally known in the family.

“There again!” said Jemima. “What a pity! Father took his dinner with him this morning, and isn’t coming home till night. But he’s always talking of you, Polly, and telling the children about you; and is the peaceablest, patientest, best temperedest soul in the world, as he always was and will be!”

“Thankee, Jemima,” cried the simple Polly; delighted by the speech, and disappointed by the absence.

“Oh you needn’t thank me, Polly,” said her sister, giving her a sound kiss upon the cheek, and then dancing little Paul cheerfully. “I say the same of you sometimes, and think it too.”

In spite of the double disappointment, it was impossible to regard in the light of a failure a visit which was greeted with such a reception; so the sisters talked hopefully about family matters, and about Biler, and about all his brothers and sisters; while the black-eyed, having performed several journeys to Banbury Cross and back, took sharp note of the furniture, the Dutch clock, the cupboard, the castle on the mantel-piece, with red and green windows in it, susceptible of illumination by a candle-end within; and a pair of small black velvet kittens, each with a lady’s reticule in its mouth; regarded by the Stagg’s Gardeners as prodigies of imitative art. The conversation soon becoming general lest the black-eyed should go off at score and turn sarcastic, that young lady related to Jemima a summary of everything she knew concerning Mr. Dombey, his prospects, family, pursuits, and character. Also an exact inventory of her personal wardrobe, and some account of her principal relations and friends. Having relieved her mind of these disclosures, she partook of shrimps and porter, and evinced a disposition to swear eternal friendship.

Little Florence herself was not behind-hand in improving the occasion; for, being conducted forth by the young Toodles to inspect some toadstools, and other curiosities of the Gardens, she entered with them, heart and soul, on the formation of a temporary breakwater across a small green pool that had collected in a corner. She was still busily engaged in that labour, when sought and found by Susan; who, such was her sense of duty, even under the humanising influence of shrimps, delivered a moral address to her (punctuated with thumps) on her degenerate nature, while washing her face and hands; and predicted that she would bring the grey hairs of her family in general, with sorrow to the grave. After some delay, occasioned by a pretty long confidential interview above stairs on pecuniary subjects, between

Polly and Jemima, an interchange of babies was again effected—for Polly had all this time retained her own child, and Jemima little Paul—and the visitors took leave.

But first the young Toodles, victims of a pious fraud, were deluded into repairing in a body to a chandler's shop in the neighbourhood, for the ostensible purpose of spending a penny; and when the coast was clear, Polly fled: Jemima calling after her that if they could only go round towards the City Road on their way back, they would be sure to meet little Biler coming from school.

“Do you think that we might make time to go a little round in that direction, Susan?” inquired Polly, when they halted to take breath.

“Why not, Mrs. Richards?” returned Susan.

“It's getting on towards our dinner time you know,” said Polly.

But lunch had rendered her companion more than indifferent to this grave consideration, so she allowed no weight to it, and they resolved to go “a little round.”

Now, it happened that poor Biler's life had been, since yesterday morning, rendered weary by the costume of the Charitable Grinders. The youth of the streets could not endure it. No young vagabond could be brought to bear its contemplation for a moment, without throwing himself upon the unoffending wearer, and doing him a mischief. His social existence had been more like that of an early Christian, than an innocent child of the nineteenth century. He had been stoned in the streets. He had been overthrown into gutters; bespattered with mud; violently flattened against posts. Entire strangers to his person had lifted his yellow cap off his head, and cast it to the winds. His legs had not only undergone verbal criticisms and revilings, but had been handled and pinched. That very morning, he had received a perfectly unsolicited black eye on his way to the Grinders' establishment, and had been punished for it by the master, a superannuated old Grinder of savage disposition, who had been appointed schoolmaster because he didn't know anything, and wasn't fit for anything, and for whose cruel cane all chubby little boys had a perfect fascination.

Thus it fell out that Biler, on his way home, sought unfrequented paths, and slunk along by narrow passages and back streets, to avoid his tormentors. Being compelled to emerge into the main road, his ill fortune brought him at last where a small party of boys, headed by a ferocious young butcher, were lying in wait for any means of pleasurable excitement that might happen. These, finding a Charitable Grinder in the midst of them—unaccountably delivered over, as it were, into their hands—set up a general yell and rushed upon him.

But it so fell out likewise, that, at the same time, Polly, looking hopelessly along the road before her, after a good hour's walk, had said it was no use going any farther, when suddenly she saw this sight. She no sooner saw it than, uttering a hasty exclamation, and giving Master Dombey to the black-eyed, she started to the rescue of her unhappy little son.

Surprises, like misfortunes, rarely come alone. The astonished Susan Nipper and her two young charges were rescued by the bystanders from under the very wheels of a passing carriage before they knew what had happened; and at that moment (it was market day) a thundering alarm of "Mad Bull!" was raised.

With a wild confusion before her, of people running up and down, and shouting, and wheels running over them, and boys fighting, and mad bulls coming up, and the nurse in the midst of all these dangers being torn to pieces, Florence screamed and ran. She ran till she was exhausted, urging Susan to do the same; and then, stopping and wringing her hands as she remembered they had left the other nurse behind, found, with a sensation of terror not to be described, that she was quite alone.

"Susan! Susan!" cried Florence, clapping her hands in the very ecstasy of her alarm. "Oh, where are they! where are they!"

"Where are they?" said an old woman, coming hobbling across as fast as she could from the opposite side of the way. "Why did you run away from 'em?"

"I was frightened," answered Florence. "I didn't know what I did. I thought they were with me. Where are they?"

The old woman took her by the wrist, and said, "I'll show you."

She was a very ugly old woman, with red rims round her eyes, and a mouth that mumbled and chattered of itself when she was not speaking. She was miserably dressed, and carried some skins over her arm. She seemed to have followed Florence some little way at all events, for she had lost her breath; and this made her uglier still, as she stood trying to regain it: working her shrivelled yellow face and throat into all sorts of contortions.

Florence was afraid of her, and looked, hesitating, up the street, of which she had almost reached the bottom. It was a solitary place—more a back road than a street—and there was no one in it but herself and the old woman.

"You needn't be frightened now," said the old woman, still holding her tight. "Come along with me."

"I—I don't know you. What's your name?" asked Florence.

"Mrs. Brown," said the old woman. "Good Mrs. Brown."

"Are they near here?" asked Florence, beginning to be led away.

"Susan an't far off," said Good Mrs. Brown; "and the others are close to her."

"Is anybody hurt?" cried Florence.

"Not a bit of it," said Good Mrs. Brown.

The child shed tears of delight on hearing this, and accompanied the old woman willingly; though she could not help glancing at her face as they went along—particularly at that industrious mouth—and wondering whether Bad Mrs. Brown, if there were such a person, was at all like her.

They had not gone far, but had gone by some very uncomfortable places, such as brick-fields and tile-yards, when the old woman turned down a dirty lane, where the mud lay in deep black ruts in the middle of the road. She stopped before a shabby little house, as closely shut up as a house that was full of cracks and crevices could be. Opening the door with a key she took out of her bonnet, she pushed the child before her into a back room, where there was a great heap of rags of different colours lying on the floor; a heap of bones, and a heap of sifted dust or cinders; but there was no furniture at all, and the walls and ceiling were quite black.

The child became so terrified that she was stricken speechless, and looked as though about to swoon.

"Now don't be a young mule," said Good Mrs. Brown, reviving her with a shake. "I'm not a going to hurt you. Sit upon the rags."

Florence obeyed her, holding out her folded hands, in mute supplication.

"I'm not a going to keep you, even, above an hour," said Mrs. Brown. "D'ye understand what I say?"

The child answered with great difficulty, "Yes."

"Then," said Good Mrs. Brown, taking her own seat on the bones, "don't vex me. If you don't, I tell you I won't hurt you. But if you do, I'll kill you. I could have you killed at any time—even if you was in your own bed at home. Now let's know who you are, and what you are, and all about it."

The old woman's threats and promises; the dread of giving her offence; and the habit, unusual to a child, but almost natural to Florence now, of being quiet, and repressing what she felt, and feared, and hoped; enabled her to do this bidding, and to tell her little history, or what she knew of it. Mrs. Brown listened attentively, until she had finished.

"So your name's Dombey, eh!" said Mrs. Brown.

"Yes ma'am."

"I want that pretty frock, Miss Dombey," said Good Mrs. Brown, "and that little bonnet, and a petticoat or two, and anything else you can spare. Come! Take 'em off."

Florence obeyed as fast as her trembling hands would allow; keeping, all the while, a frightened eye on Mrs. Brown. When she had divested herself of all the articles of apparel mentioned by that lady, Mrs. B. examined them at leisure, and seemed tolerably well satisfied with their quality and value.

"Humph!" she said, running her eyes over the child's slight figure, "I don't see anything else—except the shoes. I must have the shoes, Miss Dombey."

Poor little Florence took them off with equal alacrity, only too glad to have any more means of conciliation about her. The old woman then produced some wretched substitutes from the bottom of the heap of rags, which she turned up for that purpose; together with a girl's cloak, quite worn out and very old; and the crushed remains of a bonnet that had probably been picked up from some ditch or dunghill. In this dainty raiment, she instructed Florence to dress herself; and as such preparation seemed a prelude to her release, the child complied with increased readiness, if possible.

In hurriedly putting on the bonnet, if that may be called a bonnet which was more like a pad to carry loads on, she caught it in her hair which grew luxuriantly, and could not immediately disentangle it. Good Mrs. Brown whipped out a large pair of scissors, and fell into an unaccountable state of excitement.

"Why couldn't you let me be," said Mrs. Brown, "when I was contented. You little fool!"

"I beg your pardon. I don't know what I have done," panted Florence. "I couldn't help it."

"Couldn't help it!" cried Mrs. Brown. "How do you expect I can help it? Why, Lord!" said the old woman, ruffling her curls with a furious pleasure, "anybody but me would have had 'em off first of all."

Florence was so relieved to find that it was only her hair and not her head which Mrs. Brown coveted, that she offered no resistance or entreaty, and merely raised her mild eyes towards the face of that good soul.

"If I hadn't once had a gal of my own—beyond seas now—that was proud of her hair," said Mrs. Brown, "I'd have had every lock of it. She's far away, she's far away! Oho! Oho!"

Mr. Brown's was not a melodious cry, but, accompanied with a wild tossing up of her lean arms, it was full of passionate grief, and thrilled to the heart of Florence, whom it frightened more than ever. It had its

part, perhaps, in saving her curls ; for Mrs. Brown after hovering about her with the scissors for some moments, like a new kind of butterfly, bade her hide them under the bonnet and let no trace of them escape to tempt her. Having accomplished this victory over herself, Mrs. Brown resumed her seat on the bones, and smoked a very short black pipe, mowing and mumbling all the time, as if she were eating the stem.

When the pipe was smoked out, she gave the child a rabbit-skin to carry, that she might appear more like her ordinary companion, and told her that she was now going to lead her to a public street whence she could inquire her way to her friends. But she cautioned her, with threats of summary and deadly vengeance in case of disobedience, not to talk to strangers, nor to repair to her own home (which may have been too near for Mrs. Brown's convenience), but to her father's office in the city ; also to wait at the street corner where she would be left, until the clock struck three. These directions Mrs. Brown enforced with assurances that there would be potent eyes and ears in her employment cognisant of all she did ; and these directions Florence promised faithfully and earnestly to observe.

At length Mrs. Brown, issuing forth, conducted her changed and ragged little friend through a labyrinth of narrow streets and lanes and alleys, which emerged after a long time, upon a stable yard, with a gateway at the end, whence the roar of a great thoroughfare made itself audible. Pointing out this gateway, and informing Florence that when the clock struck three she was to go to the left, Mrs. Brown, after making a parting grasp at her hair which seemed involuntary and quite beyond her own control, told her she knew what to do, and bade her go and do it ; remembering that she was watched.

With a lighter heart, but still sore afraid, Florence felt herself released, and tripped off to the corner. When she reached it, she looked back and saw the head of Good Mrs. Brown peeping out of the low wooden passage, where she had issued her parting injunctions ; likewise the fist of Good Mrs. Brown shaking towards her. But though she often looked back afterwards—every minute, at least, in her nervous recollection of the old woman—she could not see her again.

Florence remained there, looking at the bustle in the street, and more and more bewildered by it ; and in the meanwhile the clocks appeared to have made up their minds never to strike three any more. At last the steeples rang out three o'clock ; there was one close by, so she couldn't be mistaken ; and—after often looking over her shoulder, and often going a little way, and as often com-

ing back again, lest the all-powerful spies of Mrs. Brown should take offence—she hurried off, as fast as she could in her slipshod shoes, holding the rabbit-skin tight in her hand.

All she knew of her father's offices was that they belonged to Dombey and Son, and that that was a great power belonging to the city. So she could only ask the way to Dombey and Son's in the city; and as she generally made inquiry of children—being afraid to ask grown people—she got very little satisfaction indeed. But by dint of asking her way to the city after a while and dropping the rest of her inquiry for the present, she really did advance, by slow degrees, towards the heart of that great region which is governed by the terrible Lord Mayor.

Tired of walking, repulsed and pushed about, stunned by the noise and confusion, anxious for her brother and the nurses, terrified by what she had undergone, and the prospect of encountering her angry father in such an altered state; perplexed and frightened alike by what had passed, and what was passing, and what was yet before her; Florence went upon her weary way with tearful eyes, and once or twice could not help stopping to ease her bursting heart by crying bitterly. But few people noticed her at those times, in the garb she wore; or if they did, believed that she was tutored to excite compassion, and passed on. Florence, too, called to her aid all the firmness and self-reliance of a character that her sad experience had prematurely formed and tried; and keeping the end she had in view, steadily before her, steadily pursued it.

It was full two hours later in the afternoon than when she had started on this strange adventure, when, escaping from the clash and clangour of a narrow street full of carts and waggons, she peeped into a kind of wharf or landing-place, upon the river side, where there were a great many packages, casks, and boxes, strewn about; a large pair of wooden scales; and a little wooden house on wheels, outside of which, looking at the neighbouring masts and boats, a stout man stood whistling, with his pen behind his ear, and his hands in his pockets, as if his day's work were nearly done.

“Now then!” said this man, happening to turn round. “We haven't got anything for you, little girl. Be off!”

“If you please, is this the city?” asked the trembling daughter of the Dombey's.

“Ah! it's the city. You know that well enough, I dare say. Be off! We haven't got anything for you.”

“I don't want anything, thank you,” was the timid answer. “Except to know the way to Dombey and Son's.”

The man who had been strolling carelessly towards her, seemed surprised by this reply, and looking attentively in her face, rejoined :

“Why, what can *you* want with Dombey and Son’s?”

“To know the way there, if you please.”

The man looked at her yet more curiously, and rubbed the back of his head so hard in his wonderment that he knocked his own hat off.

“Joe!” he called to another man—a labourer—as he picked it up and put it on again.

“Joe it is!” said Joe.

“Where’s that young spark of Dombey’s who’s been watching the shipment of them goods?”

“Just gone, by the t’other gate,” said Joe.

“Call him back a minute.”

Joe ran up an archway, bawling as he went, and very soon returned with a blithe-looking boy.

“You’re Dombey’s jockey, ain’t you?” said the first man.

“I’m in Dombey’s House, Mr. Clark,” returned the boy.

“Look’ye, here, then,” said Mr. Clark.

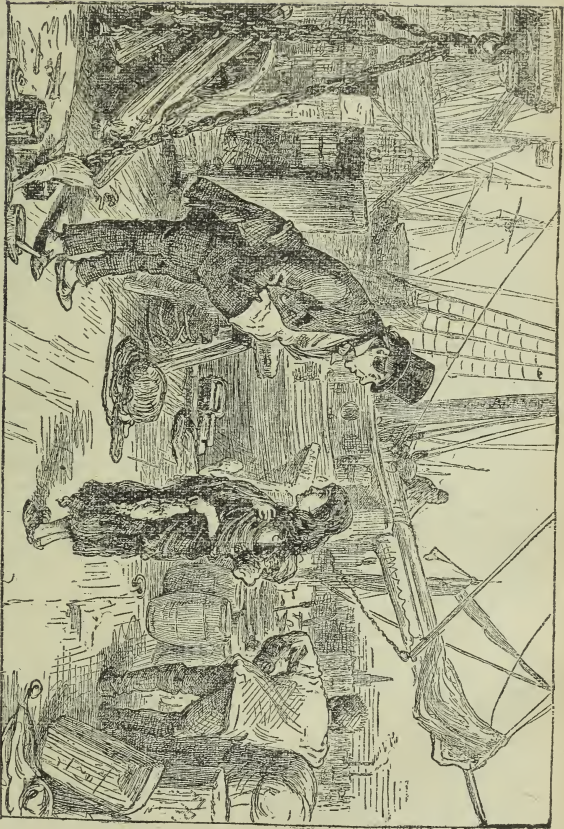
Obedient to the indication of Mr. Clark’s hand, the boy approached towards Florence, wondering, as well he might, what he had to do with her. But she, who had heard what passed, and who, besides the relief of so suddenly considering herself safe and at her journey’s end, felt reassured beyond all measure by his lively youthful face and manner, ran eagerly up to him, leaving one of the slipshod shoes upon the ground and caught his hand in both of hers.

“I am lost, if you please!” said Florence.

“Lost!” cried the boy.

“Yes, I was lost this morning, a long way from here—and I have had my clothes taken away, since—and I am not dressed in my own now—and my name is Florence Dombey, my little brother’s only sister—and, oh dear, dear, take care of me, if you please!” sobbed Florence, giving full vent to the childish feelings she had so long suppressed, and bursting into tears. At the same time her miserable bonnet falling off, her hair came tumbling down about her face: moving to speechless admiration and commiseration, young Walter, nephew of Solomon Gills, Ships’ Instrument-maker in general.

Mr. Clark stood rapt in amazement: observing under his breath, *I never saw such a start on this wharf before.* Walter picked up the shoe, and put it on the little foot as the Prince in the story might have fitted Cinderella’s slipper on. He hung the rabbit-skin over his left arm; gave the right to Florence: and felt not to say like Richard Whittington—that is a tame comparison—but like



“WHY, WHAT CAN YOU WANT WITH DOMBEY AND SON’S?”
—Dombey and Son, Vol. Eleven, page 409.

Saint George of England, with the dragon lying dead before him.

"Don't cry, Miss Dombey," said Walter, in a transport of enthusiasm. "What a wonderful thing for me that I am here. You are as safe now as if you were guarded by a whole boat's crew of picked men from a man-of-war. Oh don't cry."

"I won't cry any more," said Florence. "I am only crying for joy."

"Crying for joy!" thought Walter, "and I'm the cause of it. Come along, Miss Dombey. There's ~~the~~ other shoe off now! Take mine, Miss Dombey."

"No, no, no," said Florence, checking him in the act of impetuously pulling off his own. "These do better. These do very well."

"Why, to be sure," said Walter, glancing at her foot, "mine are a mile too large. What am I thinking about! You never could walk in *mine*! Come along, Miss Dombey. Let me see the villain who will dare molest you now."

So Walter, looking immensely fierce, led off Florence, looking very happy; and they went arm in arm along the streets, perfectly indifferent to any astonishment that their appearance might or did excite by the way.

It was growing dark and foggy, and beginning to rain too; but they cared nothing for this: being both wholly absorbed in the late adventures of Florence, which she related with the innocent good faith and confidence of her years, while Walter listened, as if, far from the mud and grease of Thames-street, they were rambling alone among the broad leaves and tall trees of some desert island in the tropics—as he very likely fancied, for the time, they were.

"Have we far to go?" asked Florence at last, lifting her eyes to her companion's face.

"Ah! By the bye," said Walter, stopping, "let me see; where are we? Oh! I know. But the offices are shut up now, Miss Dombey. There's nobody there. Mr. Dombey has gone home long ago. I suppose we must go home too? or, stay. Suppose I take you to my uncle's, where I live—it's very near here—and go to your house in a coach to tell them you are safe, and bring you back some clothes. Won't that be best?"

"I think so," answered Florence. "Don't you? What do you think?"

As they stood deliberating in the street, a man passed them, who glanced quickly at Walter as he went by, as if he recognised him; but seeming to correct that first impression, he passed on without stopping.

"Why, I think it's Mr. Carker," said Walter, "Carker in our House. Not Carker our manager, Miss Dombey

—the other Carker; the junior—Halloa! Mr. Carker!”

“Is that Walter Gay?” said the other, stopping and returning. “I couldn’t believe it, with such a strange companion.”

As he stood near a lamp, listening with surprise to Walter’s hurried explanation, he presented a remarkable contrast to the two youthful figures arm-in-arm before him. He was not old, but his hair was white; his body was bent, or bowed as if by the weight of some great trouble; and there were deep lines in his worn and melancholy face. The fire of his eyes, the expression of his features, the very voice in which he spoke, were all subdued and quenched, as if the spirit within him lay in ashes. He was respectably, though very plainly dressed in black; but his clothes, moulded to the general character of his figure, seemed to shrink and abase themselves upon him, and to join in the sorrowful solicitation which the whole man from head to foot expressed, to be left unnoticed, and alone in his humility.

And yet his interest in youth and hopefulness was not extinguished with the other embers of his soul, for he watched the boy’s earnest countenance as he spoke with unusual sympathy, though with an inexplicable show of trouble and compassion, which escaped into his looks, however hard he strove to hold it prisoner. When Walter, in conclusion, put to him the question he had put to Florence, he still stood glancing at him with the same expression, as if he read some fate upon his face, mournfully at variance with its present brightness.

“What do you advise, Mr. Carker?” said Walter, smiling. “You always give me good advice, you know, when you *do* speak to me. That’s not often, though.”

“I think your own idea is the best,” he answered: looking from Florence to Walter, and back again.

“Mr. Carker,” said Walter, brightening with a generous thought, “Come! Here’s a chance for you. Go you to Mr. Dombey’s, and be the messenger of good news. It may do you some good, sir. I’ll remain at home. You shall go.”

“I!” returned the other.

“Yes. Why not, Mr. Carker?” said the boy.

He merely shook him by the hand in answer; he seemed in a manner ashamed and afraid even to do that; and bidding him good night, and advising him to make haste, turned away.

“Come, Miss Dombey,” said Walter, looking after him as they turned away also, “we’ll go to my uncle’s as quick as we can. Did you ever hear Mr. Dombey speak of Mr. Carker the junior, Miss Florence?”

“No,” returned the child, mildly, “I don’t often hear papa speak.”

“Ah! true! more shame for him,” thought Walter. After a minute’s pause, during which he had been looking down upon the gentle patient little face moving on at his side, he bestirred himself with his accustomed boyish animation and restlessness to change the subject; and one of the unfortunate shoes coming off again opportunely, proposed to carry Florence to his uncle’s in his arms. Florence, though very tired, laughingly declined the proposal, lest he should let her fall; and as they were already near the wooden midshipman, and as Walter went on to cite various precedents, from shipwrecks and other moving accidents, where younger boys than he had triumphantly rescued and carried off older girls than Florence, they were still in full conversation about it when they arrived at the Instrument-maker’s door.

“Halloa, Uncle Sol!” cried Walter, bursting into the shop, and speaking incoherently, and out of breath, from that time forth, for the rest of the evening. “Here’s a wonderful adventure! Here’s Mr. Dombey’s daughter lost in the streets, and robbed of her clothes by an old witch of a woman—found by me—brought home to our parlour to rest—look here!”

“Good Heaven!” said Uncle Sol, starting back against his favourite compass-case. “It can’t be! Well, I—”

“No, nor anybody else,” said Walter, anticipating the rest. “Nobody would, nobody could, you know. Here! just help me lift the little sofa near the fire, will you, Uncle Sol—take care of the plates—cut some dinner for her, will you uncle—throw those shoes under the grate, Miss Florence—put your feet on the fender to dry—how damp they are—here’s an adventure, uncle, eh?—God bless my soul, how hot I am!”

Solomon Gills was quite as hot, by sympathy, and in excessive bewilderment. He patted Florence’s head, pressed her to eat, pressed her to drink, rubbed the soles of her feet with his pocket-handkerchief heated at the fire, followed his locomotive nephew with his eyes, and ears, and had no clear perception of anything except that he was being constantly knocked against and tumbled over by that excited young gentleman, as he darted about the room attempting to accomplish twenty things at once, and doing nothing at all.

“Here, wait a minute, uncle,” he continued, catching up a candle, “till I run up-stairs, and get another jacket on, and then I’ll be off. I say, uncle, isn’t this an adventure?”

“My dear boy,” said Solomon, who, with his spectacles on his forehead and the great chronometer in his pocket, was incessantly oscillating between Florence on the sofa and his nephew in all parts of the parlour, “it’s the most extraordinary—”

"No, but do, uncle, please—do, Miss Florence—dinner, you know, uncle."

"Yes, yes, yes," cried Solomon, cutting instantly into a leg of mutton, as if he were catering for a giant. "I'll take care of her, Wally! I understand. Pretty dear! Famished, of course. You go and get ready. Lord bless me! Sir Richard Whittington thrice Lord Mayor of London!"

Walter was not very long in mounting to his lofty garret and descending from it, but in the mean time Florence, overcome by fatigue, had sunk into a doze before the fire. The short interval of quiet, though only a few minutes in duration, enabled Solomon Gills so far to collect his wits as to make some little arrangements for her comfort, and to darken the room, and to screen her from the blaze. Thus, when the boy returned, she was sleeping peacefully.

"That's capital!" he whispered, giving Solomon such a hug that it squeezed a new expression into his face. "Now I'm off. I'll just take a crust of bread with me, for I'm very hungry—and—don't wake her, Uncle Sol."

"No, no," said Solomon. "Pretty child."

"Pretty, indeed!" cried Walter. "I never saw such a face, Uncle Sol. Now I'm off."

"That's right," said Solomon, greatly relieved.

"I say, Uncle Sol," cried Walter, putting his face in at the door.

"Here he is again," said Solomon.

"How does she look now?"

"Quite happy," said Solomon.

"That's famous! now I'm off."

"I hope you are," said Solomon to himself.

"I say, Uncle Sol," cried Walter, reappearing at the door.

"Here he is again!" said Solomon.

"We met Mr. Carker the junior in the street, queerer than ever. He bade me good bye, but came behind us here—there's an odd thing!—for when we reached the shop door, I looked round, and saw him going quietly away, like a servant who had seen me home, or a faithful dog. How does she look now, uncle?"

"Pretty much the same as before, Wally," replied Uncle Sol.

"That's right. Now I *am* off!"

And this time he really was: and Solomon Gills, with no appetite for dinner, sat on the opposite side of the fire, watching Florence in her slumber, building a great many airy castles of the most fantastic architecture; and looking in the dim shade, and in the close vicinity of all the instruments, like a magician disguised in a Welsh wig and a suit of coffee colour, who held the child in an enchanted sleep.

In the meantime Walter proceeded towards Mr. Dombey's house at a pace seldom achieved by a hack horse from the stand ; and yet with his head out of window every two or three minutes, in impatient remonstrance with the driver. Arriving at his journey's end, he leaped out, and breathlessly announcing his errand to the servant, followed him straight into the library, where there was a great confusion of tongues, and where Mr. Dombey, his sister, and Miss Tox, Richards, and Nipper, were all congregated together.

"Oh ! I beg your pardon, sir," said Walter, rushing up to him, "but I'm happy to say it's all right, sir. Miss Dombey's found !"

The boy with his open face, and flowing hair, and sparkling eyes, panting with pleasure and excitement, was wonderfully opposed to Mr. Dombey, as he sat confronting him in his library chair.

"I told you, Louisa, that she would certainly be found," said Mr. Dombey, looking slightly over his shoulder at that lady, who wept in company with Miss Tox. "Let the servants know that no further steps are necessary. This boy who brings the information, is young Gay, from the office. How was my daughter found, sir ? I know how she was lost." Here he looked majestically at Richards. "But how was she found ? who found her ?"

"Why, I believe *I* found Miss Dombey, sir," said Walter modestly ; "at least I don't know that I can claim the merit of having exactly found her, sir, but I was the fortunate instrument of—"

"What do you mean, sir," interrupted Mr. Dombey, regarding the boy's evident pride and pleasure in his share of the transaction with an instinctive dislike, "by not having exactly found my daughter, and by being a fortunate instrument ? Be plain and coherent, if you please."

It was quite out of Walter's power to be coherent ; but he rendered himself as explanatory as he could, in his breathless state, and stated why he had come alone.

"You hear this, girl ?" said Mr. Dombey sternly to the black eyed. "Take what is necessary, and return immediately with this young man to fetch Miss Florence home. Gay, you will be rewarded to-morrow."

"Oh ! thank you, sir," said Walter. "You are very kind. I'm sure I was not thinking of any reward, sir."

"You are a boy," said Mr. Dombey, suddenly and almost fiercely ; "and what you think of, or affect to think of, is of little consequence. You have done well, sir. Don't undo it. Louisa, please to give the lad some wine."

Mr. Dombey's glance followed Walter Gay with sharp disfavour, as he left the room under the pilotage of Mrs.

Chick ; and it may be that his mind's eye followed him with no greater relish as he rode back to his uncle's with Miss Susan Nipper.

There they found that Florence, much refreshed by sleep, had dined, and greatly improved the acquaintance of Solomon Gills, with whom she was on terms of perfect confidence and ease. The black-eyed (who had cried so much that she might now be called the red-eyed, and who was very silent and depressed) caught her in her arms without a word of contradiction or reproach, and made a very hysterical meeting of it. Then converting the parlour for the nonce, into a private tying room, she dressed her, with great care, in proper clothes ; and presently led her forth, as like a Dombey as her natural disqualifications admitted of her being made.

" Good night ! " said Florence, running up to Solomon. " You have been very good to me. "

Old Sol was quite delighted, and kissed her like her grandfather.

" Good night, Walter ! Good bye ! " said Florence.

" Good bye ! " said Walter, giving both his hands.

" I'll never forget you, " pursued Florence. " No ! indeed I never will. Good bye, Walter ! "

In the innocence of her grateful heart, the child lifted up her face to his. Walter, bending down his own, raised it again, all red and burning ; and looked at Uncle Sol, quite sheepishly.

" Where's Walter ? " " Good night, Walter ! " " Good bye, Walter ! " " Shake hands, once more, Walter ! " This was still Florence's cry, after she was shut up with her little maid, in the coach. And when the coach at length moved off, Walter on the doorstep gaily returned the waving of her handkerchief, while the wooden midshipman behind him seemed, like himself, intent upon that coach alone, excluding all the other passing coaches from his observation.

In good time Mr. Dombey's mansion was gained again, and again there was a noise of tongues in the library. Again, too, the coach was ordered to wait—" for Mrs. Richards, " one of Susan's fellow-servants ominously whispered, as she passed with Florence.

The entrance of the lost child made a slight sensation, but not much. Mr. Dombey, who had never found her, kissed her once upon the forehead, and cautioned her not to run away again, or wander anywhere with treacherous attendants. Mrs. Chick stopped in her lamentations on the corruption of human nature, even when beckoned to the paths of virtue by a Charitable Grinder ; and received her with a welcome something short of the reception due to none but perfect Dombey's. Miss Tox regulated her feelings by the models before her. Rich-

ards, the culprit Richards, alone poured out her heart in broken words of welcome, and bowed herself over the little wandering head as if she really loved it.

"Ah Richards!" said Mrs. Chick, with a sigh. "It would have been much more satisfactory to those who wish to think well of their fellow creatures, and much more becoming in you, if you had shown some proper feeling, in time, for the little child that is now going to be prematurely deprived of its natural nourishment."

"Cut off," said Miss Tox, in a plaintive whisper, "from one common fountain!"

"If it was *my* ungrateful case," said Mrs. Chick, solemnly, "and I had *your* reflections, Richards, I should feel as if the Charitable Grinders' dress would blight my child, and the education choke him."

For the matter of that—but Mrs. Chick didn't know it—he had been pretty well blighted by the dress already; and as to the education, even its retributive effect might be produced in time, for it was a storm of sobs and blows.

"Louisa!" said Mr. Dombey. "It is not necessary to prolong these observations. The woman is discharged and paid. You leave this house, Richards, for taking my son—my son," said Mr. Dombey, emphatically repeating these two words, "into haunts and into society which are not to be thought of without a shudder. As to the accident which befell Miss Florence this morning, I regard that, as, in one great sense, a happy and fortunate circumstance; inasmuch as, but for that occurrence, I never could have known—and from your own lips too—of what you had been guilty. I think, Louisa, the other nurse, the young person," here Miss Nipper sobbed aloud, "being so much younger, and necessarily influenced by Paul's nurse, may remain. Have the goodness to direct that this woman's coach is paid to—" Mr. Dombey stopped and winced—"to Staggs's Gardens."

Polly moved towards the door, with Florence holding to her dress, and crying to her in the most pathetic manner not to go away. It was a dagger in the haughty father's heart, an arrow in his brain, to see how the flesh and blood he could not disown clung to this obscure stranger, and he sitting by. Not that he cared to whom his daughter turned, or from whom turned away. The swift sharp agony struck through him, as he thought of what his son might do.

His son cried lustily that night, at all events. Sooth to say, poor Paul had better reason for his tears than sons of that age often have, for he had lost his second mother—his first, so far as he knew—by a stroke as sudden as that natural affliction which had darkened the beginning of his life. At the same blow, his sister too,

who cried herself to sleep so mournfully, had lost as good and true a friend. But that is quite beside the question. Let us waste no words about it.

CHAPTER VII.

A Bird's-eye Glimpse of Miss Tox's Dwelling-place; also of the State of Miss Tox's Affections.

MISS TOX inhabited a dark little house that had been squeezed, at some remote period of English History, into a fashionable neighbourhood at the west end of the town, where it stood in the shade like a poor relation of the great street round the corner, coldly looked down upon by mighty mansions. It was not exactly in a court, and it was not exactly in a yard; but it was in the dullest of No-Thoroughfares, rendered anxious and haggard by distant double knocks. The name of this retirement, where grass grew between the chinks in the stone pavement, was Princess's-place; and in Princess's-place was Princess's Chapel, with a tinkling bell, where sometimes as many as five-and-twenty people attended service on a Sunday. The Princess's Arms was also there, and much resorted to by splendid footmen. A sedan chair was kept inside the railing before the Princess's Arms, but it had never come out, within the memory of man; and on fine mornings the top of every rail (there are eight-and-forty, as Miss Tox had often counted) was decorated with a pewter-pot.

There was another private house besides Miss Tox's in Princess's-place: not to mention an immense pair of gates, with an immense pair of lion-headed knockers on them, which were never opened by any chance, and were supposed to constitute a disused entrance to somebody's stables. Indeed, there was a smack of stabling in the air of Princess's-place: and Miss Tox's bedroom (which was at the back) commanded a vista of Mews, where hostlers, at whatever sort of work engaged, were continually accompanying themselves with effervescent noises; and where the most domestic and confidential garments of coachmen and their wives and families, usually hung, like Macbeth's banners, on the outward walls.

At this outer private house in Princess's-place, tenanted by a retired butler who had married a housekeeper, apartments were let, furnished, to a single gentleman: to wit a wooden-featured, blue-faced, Major, with his eyes starting out of his head, in whom Miss Tox recognised, as she herself expressed it, "something so truly military;" and between whom and herself, an occasional inter-

change of newspapers and pamphlets, and such Platonic dalliance, was effected through the medium of a dark servant of the major's whom Miss Tox was quite content to classify as a "native," without connecting him with any geographical idea whatever.

Perhaps there never was a smaller entry and staircase, than the entry and staircase of Miss Tox's house. Perhaps, taken altogether, from top to bottom, it was the most inconvenient little house in England, and the crookedest ; but then, Miss Tox said, what a situation ! There was very little daylight to be got there in the winter ; no sun at the best of times : air was out of the question, and traffic was walled out. Still Miss Tox said, think of the situation ! So said the blue-faced major, whose eyes were starting out of his head : who gloried in Princess's-place : and who delighted to turn the conversation at his club, whenever he could, to something connected with some of the great people in the great street round the corner, that he might have the satisfaction of saying they were his neighbours.

The dingy tenement inhabited by Miss Tox was her own ; having been devised and bequeathed to her by the deceased owner of the fishy eye in the locket, of whom a miniature portrait, with a powdered head and a pig-tail, balanced the kettle-holder on opposite sides of the parlour fire-place. The greater part of the furniture was of the powdered head and pigtail period : comprising a plate-warmer, always languishing and sprawling its four attenuated bow legs in somebody's way ; and an obsolete harpsichord, illuminated round the maker's name with a painted garland of sweet peas.

Although Major Bagstock had arrived at what is called in polite literature, the grand meridian of life, and was proceeding on his journey down-hill with hardly any throat, and a very rigid pair of jaw bones, and long-flapped elephantine ears, and his eyes and complexion in the state of artificial excitement already mentioned, he was mightily proud of awakening an interest in Miss Tox, and tickled his vanity with the fiction that she was a splendid woman who had her eye on him. This he had several times hinted at the club : in connection with little jocularities, of which old Joe Bagstock, old Joey Bagstock, old J. Bagstock, old Josh Bagstock, or so forth, was the perpetual theme : it being, as it were, the major's stronghold and donjon keep of light humour, to be on the most familiar terms with his own name.

"Joey B., sir," the major would say, with a flourish of his walking-stick, "is worth a dozen of you. If you had a few more of the Bagstock breed among you, sir, you'd be none the worse for it. Old Joe, sir, needn't look far for a wife even now, if he was on the lookout ;

but he's hard-hearted, sir, is Joe—he's tough, sir, tough, and de-vilish sly!" After such a declaration wheezing sounds would be heard; and the major's blue eyes would deepen into purple, while his eyes strained and started convulsively.

Notwithstanding his very liberal laudation of himself, however, the major was selfish. It may be doubted whether there ever was a more entirely selfish person at heart; or at stomach is perhaps a better expression, seeing that he was more decidedly endowed with that latter organ than with the former. He had no idea of being overlooked or slighted by anybody; least of all, had he the remotest comprehension of being overlooked and slighted by Miss Tox.

And yet, Miss Tox, as it appeared, forgot him—gradually forgot him. She began to forget him soon after her discovery of the Toodle family. She continued to forget him up to the time of the christening. She went on forgetting him with compound interest after that. Something or somebody had superseded him as a source of interest.

"Good morning, ma'am," said the major, meeting Miss Tox in Princess's-place, some weeks after the changes chronicled in the last chapter.

"Good morning, sir," said Miss Tox; very coldly.

"Joe Bagstock, ma'am," observed the major, with his usual gallantry, "has not had the happiness of bowing to you at your window, for a considerable period. Joe has been hardly used, ma'am. His sun has been behind a cloud."

Miss Tox inclined her head; but very coldly indeed.

"Joe's luminary has been out of town ma'am, perhaps," inquired the major.

"I? out of town? oh no, I have not been out of town," said Miss Tox. "I have been much engaged lately. My time is nearly all devoted to some very intimate friends. I am afraid I have none to spare, even now. Good morning, sir!"

As Miss Tox, with her most fascinating step and carriage, disappeared from Princess's-place, the major stood looking after her with a bluer face than ever: muttering and growling some not at all complimentary remarks.

"Why, damme, sir," said the major, rolling his lobster eyes round and round Princess's-place, and apostrophising its fragrant air, "six months ago, the woman loved the ground Josh Bagstock walked on. What's the meaning of it?"

The major decided, after some consideration, that it meant man-traps; that it meant plotting and snaring; that Miss Tox was digging pitfalls. "But you won't

catch Joe, ma'am," said the major. "He's tough, ma'am, tough, is J. B. Tough, and de-vilish sly!" over which reflection he chuckled for the rest of the day.

But still, when that day and many other days were gone and past, it seemed that Miss Tox took no heed whatever of the major, and thought nothing at all about him. She had been wont, once upon a time, to look out at one of her little dark windows by accident, and blushing return the major's greeting; but now, she never gave the major a chance, and cared nothing at all whether he looked over the way or not. Other changes had come to pass too. The major, standing in the shade of his own apartment, could make out that an air of greater smartness had recently come over Miss Tox's house; that a new cage with gilded wires had been provided for the ancient little canary bird; that divers ornaments, cut out of coloured card-boards and paper, seemed to decorate the chimney-piece and tables; that a plant or two had suddenly sprung up in the windows; that Miss Tox occasionally practised on the harpsichord, whose garland of sweet peas was always displayed ostentatiously, crowned with the Copenhagen and Bird Waltzes in a music-book of Miss Tox's own copying.

Over and above all this, Miss Tox had long been dressed with uncommon care and elegance in slight mourning. But this helped the major out of his difficulty; and he determined within himself that she had come into a small legacy, and grown proud.

It was on the very next day after he had eased his mind by arriving at this decision, that the major, sitting at his breakfast, saw an apparition so tremendous and wonderful in Miss Tox's little drawing-room, that he remained for some time rooted to his chair; then, rushing into the next room returned with a double-barreled opera-glass, through which he surveyed it intently for some minutes.

"It's a Baby, sir," said the major, shutting up the glass again, "for fifty thousand pounds!"

The major couldn't forget it. He could do nothing but whistle, and stare to that extent, that his eyes compared with what they now became, had been in former times quite cavernous and sunken. Day after day, two, three, four times a week, this baby reappeared. The major continued to stare and whistle. To all other intents and purposes he was alone in Princess's-place. Miss Tox had ceased to mind what he did. He might have been black as well as blue, and it would have been of no consequence to her.

The perseverance with which she walked out of Princess's-place to fetch this baby and its nurse, and walked back with them, and walked home with them again,

and continually mounted guard over them ; and the perseverance with which she nursed it herself, and fed it, and played with it, and froze its young blood with airs upon the harpsicord ; was extraordinary. At about the same period too, she was seized with a passion for looking at a certain bracelet ; also with a passion for looking at the moon, of which she would take long observations from her chamber window. But whatever she looked at ; sun, moon, stars, or bracelets ; she looked no more at the major. And the major whistled, and stared, and wondered, and dodged about his room, and could make nothing out of it.

“ You’ll quite win my brother Paul’s heart, and that’s the truth, my dear,” said Mrs. Chick, one day.

Miss Tox turned pale.

“ He grows more like Paul every day,” said Mrs. Chick.

Miss Tox returned no other reply than by taking the little Paul in her arms, and making his cockade perfectly flat and limp with her caresses.

“ His mother, my dear,” said Miss Tox, “ whose acquaintance I was to have made through you, does he at all resemble her ? ”

“ Not at all,” returned Louisa.

“ She was—she was pretty, I believe ? ” faltered Miss Tox.

“ Why, poor dear Fanny was interesting,” said Mrs. Chick, after some judicial consideration. “ Certainly interesting. She had not that air of commanding superiority which one would somehow expect, almost as a matter of course, to find in my brother’s wife ; nor had she that strength and vigour of mind which such a man requires.”

Miss Tox heaved a deep sigh.

“ But she was pleasing : ” said Mrs. Chick : “ extremely so. And she meant !—oh, dear, how well poor Fanny meant ! ”

“ You angel ! ” cried Miss Tox to little Paul. “ You picture of your own papa ! ”

If the major could have known how many hopes and ventures, what a multitude of plans and speculations, rested on that baby head ; and could have seen them hovering, in all their heterogeneous confusion and disorder, round the puckered cap of the unconscious little Paul ; he might have stared indeed. Then would he have recognised, among the crowd, some few ambitious motes and beams belonging to Miss Tox : then would he perhaps have understood the nature of that lady’s faltering investment in the Dombey Firm.

If the child himself could have awakened in the night, and seen, gathered about his cradle-curtains, faint re-

flections of the dreams that other people had of him, they might have scared him, with good reason. But he slumbered on, alike unconscious of the kind intentions of Miss Tox, the wonder of the major, the early sorrows of his sister, and the sterner visions of his father; and innocent that any spot of earth contained a Dombey or a Son.

CHAPTER VIII.

Paul's further Progress, Growth, and Character.

BENEATH the watching and attentive eyes of Time—so far another Major—Paul's slumbers gradually changed. More and more light broke in upon them; distincter and distincter dreams disturbed them; an accumulating crowd of objects and impressions swarmed about his rest; and so he passed from babyhood to childhood, and became a talking, walking, wondering Dombey.

On the downfall and banishment of Richards, the nursery may be said to have been put into commission; as a Public Department is sometimes, when no individual Atlas can be found to support it. The Commissioners were, of course, Mrs. Chick and Miss Tox: who devoted themselves to their duties with such astonishing ardour that Major Bagstock had every day some new reminder of his being forsaken, while Mr. Chick, bereft of domestic supervision, cast himself upon the gay world, dined at clubs and coffee-houses, smelt of smoke on three distinct occasions, went to the play by himself, and in short, loosened (as Mrs. Chick once told him) every social bond, and moral obligation.

Yet, in spite of his early promise, all this vigilance and care could not make little Paul a thriving boy. Naturally delicate, perhaps, he pined and wasted after the dismissal of his nurse, and, for a long time, seemed but to wait his opportunity of gliding through their hands, and seeking his lost mother. This dangerous ground in his steeple-chase towards manhood passed, he still found it very rough riding, and was grievously beset by all the obstacles in his course. Every tooth was a break-neck fence, and every pimple in the measles a stone wall to him. He was down in every fit of the hooping-cough, and rolled upon and crushed by a whole field of small diseases, that came trooping on each other's heels to prevent his getting up again. Some bird of prey got into his throat instead of the thrush; and the very chickens turning ferocious—if they have anything to do with that infant malady to which they lend their name—worried him like tiger-cats.

The chill of Paul's christening had struck home, per-

haps to some sensitive part of his nature, which could not recover itself in the cold shade of his father; but he was an unfortunate child from that day. Mrs. Wickam often said she never see a dear so put upon.

Mrs. Wickam was a waiter's wife—which would seem equivalent to being any other man's widow—whose application for an engagement in Mr. Dombey's service had been favourably considered, on account of the apparent impossibility of her having any followers, or any one to follow; and who, from within a day or two of Paul's sharp weaning, had been engaged as his nurse. Mrs. Wickam was a meek woman, of a fair complexion, with her eyebrows always elevated, and her head always drooping; who was always ready to pity herself, or to be pitied, or to pity anybody else; and who had a surprising natural gift of viewing all subjects in an utterly forlorn and pitiable light, and bringing dreadful precedents to bear upon them, and deriving the greatest consolation from the exercise of that talent.

It is hardly necessary to observe that no touch of this quality ever reached the magnificent knowledge of Mr. Dombey. It would have been remarkable, indeed, if any had; when no one in the house—not even Mrs. Chick or Miss Tox—dared ever whisper to him that there had, on any one occasion, been the least reason for uneasiness in reference to little Paul. He had settled, within himself, that the child must necessarily pass through a certain routine of minor maladies, and that the sooner he did so the better.

If he could have bought him off, or provided a substitute, as in the case of an unlucky drawing for the militia, he would have been glad to do so on liberal terms. But as this was not feasible, he merely wondered, in his haughty manner, now and then, what nature meant by it; and comforted himself with the reflection that there was another milestone passed upon the road, and that the great end of the journey lay so much the nearer. For the feeling uppermost in his mind, now and constantly intensifying, and increasing in it as Paul grew older, was impatience. Impatience for the time to come, when his visions of their united consequence and grandeur would be triumphantly realised.

Some philosophers tell us that selfishness is at the root of our best loves and affections. Mr. Dombey's young child was, from the beginning, so distinctly important to him as a part of his own greatness, or (which is the same thing) of the greatness of Dombey and Son, that there is no doubt his parental affection might have been easily traced, like many a goodly superstructure of fair fame, to a very low foundation. But he loved his son with all the love he had. If there were a warm place in his

frosty heart, his son occupied it ; if its very hard surface could receive the impression of any image, the image of that son was there ; though not so much as an infant, or as a boy, but as a grown man—the “ Son ” of the Firm. Therefore he was impatient to advance into the future, and to hurry over the intervening passages of his history. Therefore he had little or no anxiety about them, in spite of his love ; feeling as if the boy had a charmed life, and *must* become the man with whom he held such constant communication in his thoughts, and for whom he planned and projected, as for an existing reality, every day.

Thus Paul grew to be nearly five years old. He was a pretty little fellow ; though there was something wan and wistful in his small face, that gave occasion to many significant shakes of Mrs. Wickam’s head, and many long-drawn inspirations of Mrs. Wickam’s breath. His temper gave abundant promise of being imperious in after-life ; and he had as hopeful an apprehension of his own importance, and the rightful subservience of all other things and persons to it, as heart could desire. He was childish and sportive enough at times, and not of a sullen disposition ; but he had a strange old-fashioned, thoughtful way, at other times, of sitting brooding in his miniature arm-chair, when he looked (and talked) like one of those terrible little Beings in the Fairy tales, who, at a hundred and fifty or two hundred years of age, fantastically represented the children for whom they have been substituted. He would frequently be stricken with this precocious mood up-stairs, in the nursery ; and would sometimes lapse into it suddenly, exclaiming that he was tired : even while playing with Florence, or driving Miss Tox in single harness. But at no time did he fall into it so surely, as when, his little chair being carried down into his father’s room, he sat there with him after dinner, by the fire. They were the strangest pair at such a time that ever firelight shone upon. Mr. Dombey so erect and solemn, gazing at the blaze ; his little image, with an old, old, face, peering into the red perspective with the fixed and rapt attention of a sage. Mr. Dombey entertaining complicated worldly schemes and plans ; the little image entertaining Heaven knows what wild fancies, half-formed thoughts, and wandering speculations. Mr. Dombey stiff with starch and arrogance ; the little image by inheritance, and in unconscious imitation. The two so very much alike, and yet so monstrously contrasted.

On one of these occasions, when they had both been perfectly quiet for a long time, and Mr. Dombey only knew that the child was awake by occasionally glancing

at his eye, where the bright fire was sparkling like a jewel, little Paul broke silence thus :

“ Papa ! what’s money ? ”

The abrupt question had such immediate reference to the subject of Mr. Dombey’s thoughts, that Mr. Dombey was quite disconcerted.

“ What is money, Paul ? ” he answered. “ Money ? ”

“ Yes, ” said the child, laying his hands upon the elbows of his little chair, and turning the old face up towards Mr. Dombey’s ; “ what is money ? ”

Mr. Dombey was in a difficulty. He would have liked to give him some explanation involving the terms circulating-medium, currency, depreciation of currency, paper, bullion, rates of exchange, value of precious metals in the market, and so forth ; but looking down at the little chair, and seeing what a long way down it was, he answered : “ Gold, and silver, and copper, Guineas, shillings, half-pence. You know what they are ? ”

“ Oh yes, I know what they are, ” said Paul. “ I don’t mean that, papa. I mean what’s money after all. ”

Heaven and Earth ; how old his face was as he turned it up again towards his father’s !

“ What is money after all ! ” said Mr. Dombey, backing his chair a little, that he might the better gaze in sheer amazement at the presumptuous atom that propounded such an inquiry.

“ I mean, papa, what can it do ! ” returned Paul, folding his arms (they were hardly long enough to fold), and looking at the fire, and up at him, and at the fire, and up at him again.

Mr. Dombey drew his chair back to its former place, and patted him on the head. “ You’ll know better by-and-by, my man, ” he said. “ Money, Paul, can do anything. ” He took hold of the little hand, and beat it softly against one of his own, as he said so.

But Paul got his hand free as soon as he could ; and rubbing it gently to and fro on the elbow of his chair, as if his wit were in the palm, and he were sharpening it—and looking at the fire again, as though the fire had been his adviser and prompter—repeated, after a short pause :

“ Anything, papa ? ”

“ Yes. Anything—almost, ” said Mr. Dombey.

“ Anything means everything, don’t it, papa ? ” asked his son : not observing, or possibly not understanding, the qualification.

“ It includes it ; yes, ” said Mr. Dombey.

“ Why didn’t money save me my mama ? ” returned the child. “ It isn’t cruel, is it ? ”

“ Cruel ! ” said Mr. Dombey, settling his neckcloth,

and seeming to resent the idea. "No. A good thing can't be cruel."

"If it's a good thing, and can do anything," said the little fellow, thoughtfully, as he looked back at the fire, "I wonder why it didn't save me my mama."

He didn't ask the question of his father this time. Perhaps he had seen, with a child's quickness, that it had already made his father uncomfortable. But he repeated the thought aloud, as if it were quite an old one to him, and had troubled him very much; and sat with his chin resting on his hand, still cogitating and looking for an explanation in the fire.

Mr. Dombey having recovered from his surprise, not to say his alarm (for it was the very first occasion on which the child had ever broached the subject of his mother to him, though he had had him sitting by his side, in this same manner, evening after evening), expounded to him how that money, though a very potent spirit, never to be disparaged on any account whatever, would not keep people alive whose time was come to die, and how that we must all die, unfortunately, even in the city, though we were never so rich. But how that money caused us to be honoured, feared, respected, courted, and admired, and made us powerful and glorious in the eyes of all men; and how that it could, very often, even keep off death, for a long time together. How, for example, it had secured to his mama the services of Mr. Pilkins, by which he, Paul, had often profited himself; likewise of the great Doctor Parker Peps, whom he had never known. And how it could do all, that could be done. This, with more to the same purpose, Mr. Dombey instilled into the mind of his son, who listened attentively, and seemed to understand the greater part of what was said to him.

"It can't make me strong and quite well, either papa; can it?" asked Paul, after a short silence; rubbing his tiny hands.

"Why, you *are* strong and quite well," returned Mr. Dombey. "Are you not?"

Oh! the age of the face that was turned up again, with an expression, half of melancholy, half of slyness, on it!

"You are as strong and well as such little people usually are? Eh?" said Mr. Dombey.

"Florence is older than I am, but I am not as strong and well as Florence, I know," returned the child; "but I believe that when Florence was as little as me, she could play a great deal longer at a time without tiring herself. I am so tired sometimes," said little Paul, warming his hands, and looking in between the bars of the grate, as if some ghostly puppet-show were perform-

ing there, "and my bones ache so (Wickam says it's my bones), that I don't know what to do."

"Ay! But that's at night," said Mr. Dombey, drawing his own chair closer to his son's, and laying his hand gently on his back; "little people should be tired at night, for then they sleep well."

"Oh, it's not at night, papa," returned the child, "it's in the day; and I lie down in Florence's lap, and she sings to me. At night I dream about such cu-ri-ous things!"

And he went on, warming his hands again, and thinking about them, like an old man or a young goblin.

Mr. Dombey was so astonished, and so uncomfortable, and so perfectly at a loss how to pursue the conversation, that he could only sit looking at his son by the light of the fire, with his hand resting on his back, as if it were detained there by some magnetic attraction. Once he advanced his other hand, and turned the contemplative face towards his own for a moment. But it sought the fire again as soon as he released it; and remained, addressed towards the flickering blaze, until the nurse appeared, to summon him to bed.

"I want Florence to come for me," said Paul.

"Won't you come with your poor Nurse Wickam, Master Paul?" inquired that attendant, with great pathos.

"No, I won't," replied Paul, composing himself in his arm-chair again, like the master of the house.

Invoking a blessing upon his innocence, Mrs. Wickam withdrew, and presently Florence appeared in her stead. The child immediately started up with sudden readiness and animation, and raised towards his father in bidding him good night, a countenance so much brighter, so much younger, and so much more child-like altogether, that Mr. Dombey, while he felt greatly reassured by the change, was quite amazed at it.

After they had left the room together, he thought he heard a soft voice singing; and remembering that Paul had said his sister sung to him, he had the curiosity to open the door and listen, and look after them. She was toiling up the great, wide, vacant staircase, with him in her arms; his head was lying on her shoulder, one of his arms thrown negligently round her neck. So they went, toiling up; she singing all the way, and Paul sometimes crooning out a feeble accompaniment. Mr. Dombey looked after them until they reached the top of the staircase—not without halting to rest by the way—and passed out of his sight; and then he still stood gazing upwards, until the dull rays of the moon, glimmering in a melancholy manner through the dim skylight, sent him back to his own room.

Mrs. Chick and Miss Tox were convoked in council at dinner next day ; and when the cloth was removed, Mr. Dombey opened the proceedings by requiring to be informed, without any gloss or reservation, whether there was anything the matter with Paul, and what Mr. Pilkins said about him.

“For the child is hardly,” said Mr. Dombey, “as stout as I could wish.”

“With your usual happy discrimination, my dear Paul,” returned Mrs. Chick, “you have hit the point at once. Our darling is *not* altogether as stout as we could wish. The fact is, that his mind is too much for him. His soul is a great deal too large for his frame. I am sure the way in which that dear child talks !” said Mrs. Chick, shaking her head ; “no one would believe. His expressions, Lucretia, only yesterday upon the subject of funerals !—”

“I am afraid,” said Mr. Dombey, interrupting her testily, “that some of those persons up-stairs suggest improper subjects to the child. He was speaking to me last night about his—about his bones,” said Mr. Dombey, laying an irritated stress upon the word. “What on earth has anybody to do with the—with the—bones of my son ? He is not a living skeleton, I suppose.”

“Very far from it,” said Mrs. Chick, with unspeakable expression.

“I hope so,” returned her brother. “Funerals again ! who talks to the child of funerals ? We are not undertakers, or mutes, or grave-diggers, I believe.”

“Very far from it,” interposed Mrs. Chick, with the same profound expression as before.

“Then who puts such things into his head ?” said Mr. Dombey. “Really I was quite dismayed and shocked last night. Who put such things into his head, Louisa ?”

“My dear Paul,” said Mrs. Chick, after a moment’s silence, “it is of no use inquiring. I do not think, I will tell you candidly, that Wickam is a person of very cheerful spirits, or what one would call a—”

“A daughter of Momus,” Miss Tox softly suggested.

“Exactly so,” said Mrs. Chick ; “but she is exceedingly attentive and useful, and not at all presumptuous ; indeed I never saw a more biddable woman. If the dear child,” pursued Mrs. Chick, in the tone of one who was summing up what had been previously quite agreed upon, instead of saying it all for the first time, “is a little weakened by that last attack, and is not in quite such vigorous health as we could wish ; and if he has some temporary weakness in his system, and does occasionally seem about to lose, for the moment, the use of his—”

Mrs. Chick was afraid to say limbs, after Mr. Dombey’s recent objection to bones, and therefore waited for a sug-

gestion from Miss Tox, who, true to her office, hazarded "members."

"Members!" repeated Mr. Dombey.

"I think the medical gentleman mentioned legs this morning, my dear Louisa; did he not?" said Miss Tox.

"Why, of course he did, my love," retorted Mrs. Chick, mildly reproachful. "How can you ask me? You heard him. I say, if our dear Paul should lose, for the moment, the use of his legs, these are casualties common to many children at his time of life, and not to be prevented by any care or caution. The sooner you understand that, Paul, and admit that, the better."

"Surely you must know, Louisa," observed Mr. Dombey, "that I don't question your natural devotion to, and natural regard for, the future head of my house. Mr. Pilkins saw Paul this morning, I believe?" said Mr. Dombey.

"Yes, he did," returned his sister. "Miss Tox and myself were present. Miss Tox and myself are always present. We make a point of it. Mr. Pilkins has seen him for some days past, and a very clever man I believe him to be. He says it is nothing to speak of; which I can confirm, if that is any consolation; but he recommended, to-day, sea-air. Very wisely, Paul, I feel convinced."

"Sea-air," repeated Mr. Dombey, looking at his sister.

"There is nothing to be made uneasy by, in that," said Mrs. Chick. "My George and Frederick were both ordered sea-air, when they were about his age; and I have been ordered it myself a great many times. I quite agree with you, Paul, that perhaps topics may be incautiously mentioned up-stairs before him, which it would be as well for his little mind not to expatiate upon; but, I really don't see how that is to be helped in the case of a child of his quickness. If he were a common child, there would be nothing in it. I must say I think, with Miss Tox, that a short absence from this house, the air of Brighton, and the bodily and mental training of so judicious a person as Mrs. Pipchin for instance—"

"Who is Mrs. Pipchin, Louisa?" asked Mr. Dombey; aghast at this familiar introduction of a name he had never heard before.

"Mrs. Pipchin, my dear Paul," returned his sister, "is an elderly lady—Miss Tox knows her whole history—who has for some time devoted all the energies of her mind, with the greatest success, to the study and treatment of infancy, and who has been extremely well connected. Her husband broke his heart in—how did you say her husband broke his heart, my dear? I forget the precise circumstances."

"In pumping water out of the Peruvian Mines," replied Miss Tox.

"Not being a Pumper himself, of course," said Mrs. Chick, glancing at her brother; and it really did seem necessary to offer the explanation, for Miss Tox had spoken of him as if he had died at the handle; "but having invested money in the speculation, which failed. I believe that Mrs. Pipchin's management of children is quite astonishing. I have heard it commended in private circles ever since I was—dear me—how high!" Mrs. Chick's eye wandered about the bookcase near the bust of Mr. Pitt, which was about ten feet from the ground.

"Perhaps I should say of Mrs. Pipchin, my dear sir," observed Miss Tox, with an ingenuous blush, "having been so pointedly referred to, that the encomium which has been passed upon her by your sweet sister is well merited. Many ladies and gentlemen, now grown up to be interesting members of society, have been indebted to her care. The humble individual who addresses you was once under her charge. I believe juvenile nobility itself is no stranger to her establishment."

"Do I understand that this respectable matron keeps an establishment, Miss Tox?" inquired Mr. Dombey, condescendingly.

"Why, I really don't know," rejoined that lady, "whether I am justified in calling it so. It is not a Preparatory School by any means. Should I express my meaning," said Miss Tox, with peculiar sweetness, "if I designated it an infantine Boarding-House of a very select description?"

"On an exceedingly limited and particular scale," suggested Mrs. Chick, with a glance at her brother.

"Oh! Exclusion itself!" said Miss Tox.

There was something in this. Mrs. Pipchin's husband having broken his heart of the Peruvian mines was good. It had a rich sound. Besides, Mr. Dombey was in a state almost amounting to consternation at the idea of Paul remaining where he was one hour after his removal had been recommended by the medical practitioner. It was a stoppage and delay upon the road the child must traverse, slowly at the best, before the goal was reached. Their recommendation of Mrs. Pipchin had great weight with him; for he knew that they were jealous of any interference with their charge, and he never for a moment took it into account that they might be solicitous to divide a responsibility, of which he had, as shown just now, his own established views. Broke his heart of the Peruvian mines, mused Mr. Dombey. Well, a very respectable way of doing it.

"Supposing we should decide, on to-morrow's inquiries, to send Paul down to Brighton to this lady, who would go with him?" inquired Mr. Dombey, after some reflection.

“I don't think you could send the child anywhere at present without Florence, my dear Paul,” returned his sister hesitating. “It's quite an infatuation with him. He's very young, you know, and has his fancies.”

Mr. Dombey turned his head away, and going slowly to the bookcase, and unlocking it, brought back a book to read.

“Anybody else, Louisa?” he said, without looking up, and turning over the leaves.

“Wickam, of course. Wickam would be quite sufficient, I should say,” returned his sister. “Paul being in such hands as Mrs. Pipchin's, you could hardly send anybody who would be a further check upon her. You would go down yourself once a-week at least, of course.”

“Of course,” said Mr. Dombey; and sat looking at one page for an hour afterwards, without reading a word.

This celebrated Mrs. Pipchin was a marvellous ill-favoured, ill-conditioned old lady, of a stooping figure, with a mottled face, like bad marble, a hook nose, and a hard gray eye, that looked as if it might have been hammered at on an anvil without sustaining any injury. Forty years at least had elapsed since the Peruvian mines had been the death of Mr. Pipchin; but his relict still wore black bombazeen, of such a lustreless, deep, dead, sombre shade, that gas itself couldn't light her up after dark, and her presence was a quencher to any number of candles. She was generally spoken of as “a great manager” of children; and the secret of her management, was, to give them everything that they didn't like, and nothing that they did—which was found to sweeten their dispositions very much. She was such a bitter old lady, that one was tempted to believe there had been some mistake in the application of the Peruvian machinery, and that all her waters of gladness and milk of human kindness had been pumped out dry, instead of the mines.

The castle of this ogress and child-queller was in a steep by-street at Brighton; where the soil was more than usually chalky, flinty, and sterile, and the houses were more than usually brittle and thin; where the small front-gardens had the unaccountable property of producing nothing but marigolds, whatever was sown in them; and where snails were constantly discovered holding on to the street doors, and other public places they were not expected to ornament, with the tenacity of cupping-glasses. In the winter time the air couldn't be got out of the castle, and in the summer time the air couldn't be got in. There was such a continual reverberation of wind in it, that it sounded like a great shell, which the inhabitants were obliged to hold to their ears night and day, whether they liked it or no. It was not, naturally,

a fresh-smelling house ; and in the window of the front parlour, which was never opened, Mrs. Pipchin kept a collection of plants in pots, which imparted an earthy flavour of their own to the establishment. However choice examples of their kind, too, these plants were of a kind peculiarly adapted to the embowerment of Mrs. Pipchin. There were half-a-dozen specimens of the cactus, writhing round bits of lath, like hairy serpents ; another specimen shooting out broad claws, like a green lobster ; several creeping vegetables, possessed of sticky and adhesive leaves ; and one uncomfortable flower-pot hanging to the ceiling, which appeared to have boiled over, and tickling people underneath with its long green ends, reminded them of spiders—in which Mrs. Pipchin's dwelling was uncommonly prolific, though perhaps it challenged competition still more proudly, in the season, in point of earwigs.

Mrs. Pipchin's scale of charges being high, however, to all who could afford to pay, and Mrs. Pipchin very seldom sweetening the equable acidity of her nature in favour of anybody, she was held to be an old lady of remarkable firmness, who was quite scientific in her knowledge of the childish character. On this reputation, and on the broken heart of Mr. Pipchin, she had contrived, taking one year with another, to eke out a tolerably sufficient living since her husband's demise. Within three days after Mrs. Chick's first allusion to her, this excellent old lady had the satisfaction of anticipating a handsome addition to her current receipts, from the pocket of Mr. Dombey ; and of receiving Florence and her little brother Paul, as inmates of the castle.

Mrs. Chick and Miss Tox, who had brought them down on the previous night (which they all passed at an hotel), had just driven away from the door, on their journey home again ; and Mrs. Pipchin, with her back to the fire, stood, reviewing the new-comers, like an old soldier. Mrs. Pipchin's middle-aged niece, her good-natured and devoted slave, but possessing a gaunt and iron-bound aspect, and much afflicted with boils on her nose, was divesting Master Bitherstone of the clean collar he had worn on parade. Miss Pankey, the only other little boarder at present, had that moment been walked off to the castle dungeon (an empty apartment at the back, devoted to correctional purposes), for having sniffed thrice, in the presence of visitors.

"Well, sir," said Mrs. Pipchin to Paul, "how do you think you shall like me?"

"I don't think I shall like you at all," replied Paul.

"I want to go away. This isn't my house."

"No. It's mine," retorted Mrs. Pipchin.

"It's a very nasty one," said Paul.

“There’s a worse place in it than this, though,” said Mrs. Pipchin, “where we shut up our bad boys.”

“Has *he* ever been in it?” asked Paul: pointing out Master Bitherstone.

Mrs. Pipchin nodded assent; and Paul had enough to do, for the rest of that day, in surveying Master Bitherstone from head to foot, and watching all the workings of his countenance, with the interest attaching to a boy of mysterious and terrible experiences.

At one o’clock there was a dinner, chiefly of the farinaceous and vegetable kind, when Miss Pankey, (a mild little blue-eyed morsel of a child, who was shampoo’d every morning and seemed in danger of being rubbed away, altogether) was led in from captivity by the ogress herself, and instructed that nobody who sniffed before visitors ever went to Heaven. When this great truth had been thoroughly impressed upon her, she was regaled with rice; and subsequently repeated the form of grace established in the castle, in which there was a special clause, thanking Mrs. Pipchin for a good dinner. Mrs. Pipchin’s niece, Berinthia, took cold pork. Mrs. Pipchin, whose constitution required warm nourishment, made a special repast of mutton-chops, which were brought in hot and hot, between two plates, and smelt very nice.

As it rained after dinner, and they couldn’t go out walking on the beach, and Mrs. Pipchin’s constitution required rest after chops, they went away with Berry (otherwise Berinthia) to the dungeon; an empty room looking out upon a chalk wall and water-butt, and made ghastly by a ragged fire-place without any stove in it. Enlivened by company, however, this was the best place after all; for Berry played with them there, and seemed to enjoy a game at romps as much as they did; until Mrs. Pipchin knocking angrily at the wall, like the Cock-lane ghost revived, they left off, and Berry told them stories in a whisper until twilight.

For tea there was plenty of milk and water, and bread and butter, with a little black tea-pot for Mrs. Pipchin and Berry, and buttered toast unlimited for Mrs. Pipchin, which was brought in, hot and hot, like the chops. Though Mrs. Pipchin got very greasy, outside, over this dish, it didn’t seem to lubricate her, internally, at all; for she was as fierce as ever, and the hard gray eye knew no softening.

After tea, Berry brought out a little work-box, with the Royal Pavilion on the lid, and fell to working busily; while Mrs. Pipchin, having put on her spectacles and opened a great volume bound in green baize, began to nod. And whenever Mrs. Pipchin caught herself falling forward into the fire, and woke up, she filliped Master Bitherstone on the nose for nodding too.

At last it was the children's bedtime, and after prayers they went to bed. As little Miss Pankey was afraid of sleeping alone in the dark, Mrs. Pipchin always made a point of driving her up-stairs herself, like a sheep; and it was cheerful to hear Miss Pankey moaning long afterwards, in the least eligible chamber, and Mrs. Pipchin now and then going in to shake her. At about half-past nine o'clock the odour of a warm sweet-bread (Mrs. Pipchin's constitution wouldn't go to sleep without sweet-bread) diversified the prevailing fragrance of the house, which Mrs. Wickam said was "a smell of building;" and slumber fell upon the castle shortly after.

The breakfast next morning was like the tea over night, except that Mrs. Pipchin took her roll instead of toast, and seemed a little more irate when it was over. Master Bitherstone read aloud to the rest a pedigree from Genesis (judiciously selected by Mrs. Pipchin), getting over the names with the ease and clearness of a person tumbling up the treadmill. That done, Miss Pankey was borne away to be shampoo'd; and Master Bitherstone to have something else done to him with salt water, from which he always returned very blue and dejected. Paul and Florence went out in the meantime on the beach with Wickam—who was constantly in tears—and at about noon Mrs. Pipchin presided over some Early Readings. It being a part of Mrs. Pipchin's system not to encourage a child's mind to develope and expand itself like a young flower, but to open it by force like an oyster, the moral of these lessons was usually of a violent and stunning character: the hero—a naughty boy—seldom, in the mildest catastrophe, being finished off by anything less than a lion, or a bear.

Such was life at Mrs. Pipchin's. On Saturday Mr. Dombey came down; and Florence and Paul would go to his hotel, and have tea. They passed the whole of Sunday with him, and generally rode out before dinner; and on these occasions Mr. Dombey seemed to grow, like Falstaff's assailants, and instead of being one man in buckram, to become a dozen. Sunday evening was the most melancholy evening in the week; for Mrs. Pipchin always made a point of being particularly cross on Sunday nights. Miss Pankey was generally brought back from an aunt's at Rottingdean, in deep distress; and Master Bitherstone, whose relatives were all in India, and who was required to sit, between the services, in an erect position with his head against the parlour wall neither moving hand nor foot, suffered so acutely in his young spirits that he once asked Florence, on a Sunday night, if she could give him any idea of the way back to Bengal.

But it was generally said that Mrs. Pipchin was a

woman of system with children ; and no doubt she was. Certainly the wild ones went home tame enough, after sojourning for a few months beneath her hospitable roof. It was generally said, too, that it was highly creditable of Mrs. Pipchin to have devoted herself to this way of life, and to have made such a sacrifice of her feelings, and such a resolute stand against her troubles, when Mr. Pipchin broke his heart in the Peruvian mines.

At this exemplary old lady, Paul would sit staring in his little arm-chair, by the fire, for any length of time. He never seemed to know what weariness was, when he was looking fixedly at Mrs. Pipchin. He was not fond of her ; he was not afraid of her ; but in those old old moods of his, she seemed to have a grotesque attraction for him. There he would sit, looking at her, and warming his hands, and looking at her, until he sometimes quite confounded Mrs. Pipchin, ogress as she was. Once she asked him, when they were alone, what he was thinking about.

“ You,” said Paul, without the least reserve.

“ And what are you thinking about me ?” asked Mrs. Pipchin.

“ I’m thinking how old you must be,” said Paul.

“ You mustn’t say such things as that, young gentleman,” returned the dame. “ That’ll never do.”

“ Why not ?” asked Paul.

“ Because it’s not polite,” said Mrs. Pipchin, snappishly.

“ Not polite ?” said Paul.

“ No.”

“ It’s not polite,” said Paul, innocently, “ to eat all the mutton-chops and toast, Wickam says.”

“ Wickam,” retorted Mrs. Pipchin, colouring, “ is a wicked, impudent, bold-faced hussy.”

“ What’s that ?” inquired Paul.

“ Never you mind, sir,” retorted Mrs. Pipchin. “ Remember the story of the little boy that was gored to death by a mad bull for asking questions.”

“ If the bull was mad,” said Paul, “ how did *he* know that the boy had asked questions ? Nobody can go and whisper secrets to a mad bull. I don’t believe that story.”

“ You don’t believe it, sir ?” repeated Mrs. Pipchin, amazed.

“ No,” said Paul.

“ Not if it should happen to have been a tame bull, you little infidel ?” said Mrs. Pipchin.

As Paul had not considered the subject in that light, and had founded his conclusions on the alleged lunacy of the bull, he allowed himself to be put down for the present. But he sat turning it over in his mind, with such an obvious intention of fixing Mrs. Pipchin presently,

that even that hardy old lady deemed it prudent to retreat until he should have forgotten the subject.

From that time, Mrs. Pipchin appeared to have something of the same odd kind of attraction towards Paul, as Paul had towards her. She would make him move his chair to her side of the fire, instead of sitting opposite; and there he would remain in a nook between Mrs. Pipchin and the fender, with all the light of his little face absorbed into the black bombazeen drapery, studying every line and wrinkle of her countenance, and peering at the hard gray eye until Mrs. Pipchin was sometimes fain to shut it, on pretence of dozing. Mrs. Pipchin had an old black cat, who generally lay coiled upon the centre foot of the fender, purring egotistically, and winking at the fire until the contracted pupils of his eyes were like two notes of admiration. The good old lady might have been—not to record it disrespectfully—a witch, and Paul and the cat her two familiars, as they all sat by the fire together. It would have been quite in keeping with the appearance of the party if they had all sprung up the chimney in a high wind one night, and never been heard of any more.

This, however, never came to pass. The cat, and Paul, and Mrs. Pipchin, were constantly to be found in their usual places after dark; and Paul, eschewing the championship of Master Bitherstone, went on studying Mrs. Pipchin, and the cat, and the fire, night after night, as if they were a book of necromancy, in three volumes.

Mrs. Wickam put her own construction on Paul's eccentricities; and being confirmed in her low spirits by a perplexed view of chimneys from the room where she was accustomed to sit, and by the noise of the wind, and by the general dulness (gashliness was Mrs. Wickam's strong expression) of her present life, deduced the most dismal reflections from the foregoing premises. It was a part of Mrs. Pipchin's policy to prevent her own "young hussy"—that was Mrs. Pipchin's generic name for a female servant—from communicating with Mrs. Wickam: to which end she devoted much of her time to concealing herself behind doors, and springing out on that devoted maiden, whenever she made an approach towards Mrs. Wickam's apartment. But Berry was free to hold what converse she could in that quarter consistently with the discharge of the multifarious duties at which she toiled incessantly from morning to night; and to Berry Mrs. Wickam unburdened her mind.

"What a pretty fellow he is when he's asleep!" said Berry, stopping to look at Paul in bed, one night when she took up Mrs. Wickam's supper.

"Ah!" sighed Mrs. Wickam. "He need be."

“Why, he’s not ugly when he’s awake,” observed Berry.

“No, ma’am. Oh, no. No more was my uncle’s Betsey Jane,” said Mrs. Wickam.

Berry looked as if she would like to trace the connexion of ideas between Paul Dombey and Mrs. Wickam’s uncle’s Betsey Jane.

“My uncle’s wife,” Mrs. Wickam went on to say, “died just like his mama. My uncle’s child took on just as Master Paul do. My uncle’s child made people’s blood run cold, sometimes, she did !”

“How ?” asked Berry.

“I wouldn’t have sat up all night alone with Betsey Jane !” said Mrs. Wickam, “not if you’d have put Wickam into business next morning for himself. I couldn’t have done it, Miss Berry.”

Miss Berry naturally asked, why not ? But Mrs. Wickam, agreeably to the usage of some ladies in her condition, pursued her own branch of the subject without any compunction.

“Betsey Jane,” said Mrs. Wickam, “was as sweet a child as I could wish to see. I couldn’t wish to see a sweeter. Everything that a child could have in the way of illnesses, Betsey Jane had come through. The cramps was as common to her,” said Mrs. Wickam, “as biles is to yourself, Miss Berry.” Miss Berry involuntarily wrinkled her nose.

“But Betsey Jane,” said Mrs. Wickam, lowering her voice, and looking round the room, and towards Paul in bed, “had been minded, in her cradle, by her departed mother. I couldn’t say how, nor I couldn’t say when, nor I couldn’t say whether the dear child knew it or not, but Betsey Jane had been watched by her mother, Miss Berry ! You may say nonsense ! I an’t offended, miss. I hope you may be able to think in your own conscience that it *is* nonsense ; you’ll find your spirits all the better for it in this—you’ll excuse my being so free—in this burying ground of a place ; which is wearing of me down. Master Paul’s a little restless in his sleep. Pat his back, if you please.”

“Of course you think,” said Berry, gently doing what she was asked, “that *he* has been nursed by his mother, too ?”

“Betsey Jane,” returned Mrs. Wickam, in her most solemn tones, “was put upon as that child has been put upon, and changed as that child has changed. I have seen her sit, often and often, think, think, thinking, like him. I have seen her look, often and often, old, old, old, like him. I have heard her, many a time, talk just like him. I consider that child and Betsey Jane on the same footing entirely, Miss Berry.”

"Is your uncle's child alive?" asked Berry.

"Yes, miss, she is alive," returned Mrs. Wickam, with an air of triumph, for it was evident Miss Berry expected the reverse; "and is married to a silver-chaser. Oh yes, miss, SHE is alive," said Mrs. Wickam, laying strong stress on her nominative case.

It being clear that somebody was dead, Mrs. Pipchin's niece inquired who it was.

"I wouldn't wish to make you uneasy," returned Mrs. Wickam, pursuing her supper. "Don't ask me."

This was the surest way of being asked again. Miss Berry repeated her question, therefore; and after some resistance, and reluctance, Mrs. Wickam laid down her knife, and again glancing round the room and at Paul in bed, replied:

"She took fancies to people; whimsical fancies, some of them; others, affections that one might expect to see—only stronger than common. They all died."

This was so very unexpected and awful to Mrs. Pipchin's niece, that she sat upright on the hard edge of the bedstead, breathing short, and surveying her informant with looks of undisguised alarm.

Mrs. Wickam shook her left forefinger stealthily towards the bed where Florence lay; then turned it upside down, and made several emphatic points at the floor; immediately below which was the parlour in which Mrs. Pipchin habitually consumed the toast.

"Remember my words, Miss Berry," said Mrs. Wickam, "and be thankful that Master Paul is not too fond of you. I am, that he's not too fond of me, I assure you; though there isn't much to live for—you'll excuse my being so free—in this jail of a house!"

Miss Berry's emotion might have led to her patting Paul too hard on the back, or might have produced a cessation of that soothing monotony, but he turned in his bed just now, and, presently awaking, sat up in it with his hair hot and wet from the effects of some childish dream, and asked for Florence.

She was out of her own bed at the first sound of his voice; and bending over his pillow immediately, sang him to sleep again. Mrs. Wickam shaking her head, and letting fall several tears, pointed out the little group to Berry, and turned her eyes up to the ceiling.

"Good night, miss!" said Wickam, softly. "Good night! Your aunt is an old lady, Miss Berry, and it's what you must have looked for, often."

This consolatory farewell, Mrs. Wickam accompanied with a look of heartfelt anguish; and being left alone with the two children again, and becoming conscious that the wind was blowing mournfully, she indulged in

melancholy—that cheapest and most accessible of luxuries—until she was overpowered by slumber.

Although the niece of Mrs. Pipchin did not expect to find that exemplary dragon prostrate on the hearth-rug when she went down-stairs, she was relieved to find her unusually fractious and severe, and with every present appearance of intending to live a long time to be a comfort to all who knew her. Nor had she any symptoms of declining, in the course of the ensuing week, when the constitutional viands still continued to disappear in regular succession, notwithstanding that Paul studied her as attentively as ever, and occupied his usual seat between the black skirts and the fender, with unwavering constancy.

But as Paul himself was no stronger at the expiration of that time than he had been on his first arrival, though he looked much healthier in the face, a little carriage was got for him, in which he could lie at his ease, with an alphabet and other elementary works of reference, and be wheeled down to the seaside. Consistent in his odd tastes, the child set aside a ruddy-faced lad who was proposed as the drawer of this carriage, and selected, instead, his grandfather—a weazen, old, crab-faced man, in a suit of battered oilskin, who had got tough and stringy from long pickling in salt water, and who smelt like a weedy sea-beach when the tide is out.

With this notable attendant to pull him along, and Florence always walking by his side, and the despondent Wickam bringing up the rear, he went down to the margin of the ocean every day; and there he would sit or lie in his carriage for hours together: never so distressed as by the company of children—Florence alone excepted, always.

“Go away, if you please,” he would say to any child who came to bear him company. “Thank you, but I don’t want you.”

Some small voice, near his ear, would ask him how he was, perhaps.

“I am very well, I thank you,” he would answer. “But you had better go and play, if you please.”

Then he would turn his head, and watch the child away, and say to Florence, “We don’t want any others, do we? Kiss me, Floy.”

He had even a dislike, at such times, to the company of Wickam, and was well pleased when she strolled away, as she generally did, to pick up shells and acquaintances. His favourite spot was quite a lonely one, far away from most loungers; and with Florence sitting by his side at work, or reading to him, or talking to him, and the wind blowing on his face, and the water com-

ing up among the wheels of his bed, he wanted nothing more.

"Floy," he said one day, "where's India, where that boy's friends live?"

"Oh, it's a long, long distance off," said Florence, raising her eyes from her work.

"Weeks off?" asked Paul.

"Yes, dear. Many week's journey, night and day."

"If you were in India, Floy," said Paul, after being silent for a minute, "I should—what is that mama did? I forget."

"Loved me!" answered Florence.

"No, no. Don't I love you now, Floy? What is it?—Died. If you were in India, I should die, Floy."

She hurriedly put her work aside, and laid her head down on his pillow, caressing him. And so would she, she said, if he were there. He would be better soon.

"Oh! I am a great deal better now!" he answered. "I don't mean that. I mean that I should die of being so sorry and so lonely, Floy!"

Another time, in the same place, he fell asleep, and slept quietly for a long time. Awaking suddenly, he listened, started up, and sat listening.

Florence asked him what he thought he heard.

"I want to know what it says," he answered, looking steadily in her face. "The sea, Floy, what is it that it keeps on saying?"

She told him that it was only the noise of the rolling waves.

"Yes, yes," he said. "But I know that they are always saying something. Always the same thing. What place is over there?" He rose up, looking eagerly at the horizon.

She told him that there was another country opposite, but he said he didn't mean that; he meant farther away—farther away!

Very often afterwards, in the midst of their talk, he would break off, to try to understand what it was that the waves were always saying; and would rise up in his couch to look towards that invisible region far away.

CHAPTER IX.

In which the Wooden Midshipman gets into Trouble.

THAT spice of romance and love of the marvellous, of which there was a pretty strong infusion in the nature of Young Walter Gay, and which the guardianship of his uncle, old Solomon Gills, had not very much weak-



LISTENING TO THE SEA.

—Dombey and Son, Vol. Eleven, page 441.

ened by the waters of stern practical experience, was the occasion of his attaching an uncommon and delightful interest to the adventure of Florence with good Mrs. Brown. He pampered and cherished it in his memory, especially that part of it with which he had been associated ; until it became the spoiled child of his fancy, and took its own way, and did what it liked with it.

The recollection of those incidents, and his own share in them, may have been made the more captivating, perhaps, by the weekly dreamings of old Sol and Captain Cuttle on Sundays. Hardly a Sunday passed, without mysterious references being made by one or other of those worthy chums to Richard Whittington ; and the latter gentleman had even gone so far as to purchase a ballad of considerable antiquity, that had long fluttered among many others, chiefly expressive of maritime sentiments, on a dead wall in the Commercial-road : which poetical performance set forth the courtship and nuptials of a promising young coal-whipper with a certain " lovely Peg," the accomplished daughter of the master and part-owner of a Newcastle collier. In this stirring legend, Captain Cuttle descried a profound metaphysical bearing on the case of Walter and Florence ; and it excited him so much, that on very festive occasions, as birthdays and a few other non-Dominical holidays, he would roar through the whole song in the little back parlour ; making an amazing shake on the word Pe—e—eg, with which every verse concluded, in compliment to the heroine of the piece.

But a frank, free-spirited, open-hearted boy, is not much given to analysing the nature of his own feelings, however strong their hold upon him : and Walter would have found it difficult to decide this point. He had a great affection for the wharf where he had encountered Florence, and for the streets (albeit not enchanting in themselves by which they had come home. The shoes that had so often tumbled off by the way, he preserved in his own room ; and sitting in the little back parlour of an evening, he had drawn a whole gallery of fancy portraits of Good Mrs. Brown. It may be that he became a little smarter in his dress after that memorable occasion ; and he certainly liked in his leisure time to walk towards that quarter of the town where Mr. Dombey's house was situated, on the vague chance of passing little Florence in the street. But the sentiment of all this was as boyish and innocent as could be. Florence was very pretty, and it is pleasant to admire a pretty face. Florence was defenceless and weak, and it was a proud thought that he had been able to render her any protection and assistance. Florence was the most grateful little creature in the world, and it was delightful to see her

bright gratitude beaming in her face. Florence was neglected and coldly looked upon, and his breast was full of youthful interest for the slighted child in her dull, stately home.

Thus it came about that, perhaps some half-a-dozen time in the course of the year, Walter pulled off his hat to Florence in the street, and Florence would stop to shake hands. Mrs. Wickam (who, with a characteristic alteration of his name invariably spoke of him as "Young Graves") was so well used to this, knowing the story of their acquaintance, that she took no heed of it at all. Miss Nipper, on the other hand, rather looked out for these occasions: her sensitive young heart being secretly propitiated by Walter's good looks, and inclining to the belief that its sentiments were responded to.

In this way, Walter, so far from forgetting or losing sight of his acquaintance with Florence, only remembered it better and better. As to its adventurous beginning, and all those little circumstances which gave it a distinctive character and relish, he took them into account, more as a pleasant story very agreeable to his imagination, and not to be dismissed from it, than as a part of any matter of fact with which *he* was concerned. They set off Florence very much, to his fancy; but not himself. Sometimes, he thought (and then he walked very fast) what a grand thing it would have been for him to have been going to sea on the day after that first meeting, and to have gone, and to have done wonders there, and to have stopped away a long time, and to have come back an admiral of all the colours of the dolphin, or at least a post-captain with epaulettes of insupportable brightness, and have married Florence (then a beautiful young woman) in spite of Mr. Dombey's teeth, cravat, and watch-chain, and borne her away to the blue shores of somewhere or other, triumphantly. But these flights of fancy seldom burnished the brass plate of Dombey and Son's offices into a tablet of golden hope, or shed a brilliant lustre on their dirty skylights; and when the captain and Uncle Sol talked about Richard Whittington and masters' daughters, Walter felt that he understood his true position at Dombey and Sons, much better than they did.

So it was that he went on doing what he had to do from day to day, in a cheerful, pains-taking, merry spirit; and saw through the sanguine complexion of Uncle Sol and Captain Cuttle; and yet entertained a thousand indistinct and visionary fancies of his own, to which theirs were work-a-day probabilities. Such was his condition at the Pipchin period, when he looked a little older than of yore, but not much; and was the same light-footed, light-hearted, light-headed lad, as when he

charged into the parlour at the head of Uncle Sol and the imaginary boarders, and lighted him to bring up *the* Madeira.

"Uncle Sol," said Walter, "I don't think you're well. You haven't eaten any breakfast. I shall bring a doctor to you, if you go on like this."

"He can't give me what I want, my boy," said Uncle Sol. "At least he is in good practice if he can and then he wouldn't."

"What is it, uncle? Customers?"

"Aye," returned Solomon, with a sigh. "Customers would do."

"Confound it, uncle!" said Walter, putting down his breakfast-cup with a clatter, and striking his hand on the table: "when I see the people going up and down the street in shoals all day, and passing and repassing the shop every minute by scores, I feel half tempted to rush out, collar somebody, bring him in, and *make* him buy fifty pounds' worth of instruments for ready money. What are you looking in at the door for?—" continued Walter, apostrophizing an old gentleman with a powdered head (inaudibly to him of course), who was staring at a ship's telescope with all his might and main. "*That's* no use. I could do that. Come in and buy it!"

The old gentleman, however, having satiated his curiosity, walked calmly away.

"There he goes!" said Walter. "That's the way with 'em all. But uncle—I say, Uncle Sol"—for the old man was meditating, and had not responded to his first appeal. "Don't be cast down. Don't be out of spirits, uncle. When orders *do* come, they'll come in such a crowd you won't be able to execute 'em."

"I shall be past executing 'em, whenever they come, my boy," returned Solomon Gills. "They'll never come to this shop again, till I am out of it."

"I say, uncle! You mustn't really, you know!" urged Walter. "Don't!"

Old Sol endeavoured to assume a cheery look, and smiled across the little table at him as pleasantly as he could.

"There's nothing more than usual the matter; is there, uncle?" said Walter, leaning his elbows on the tea-tray, and bending over, to speak the more confidentially and kindly. "Be open with me, uncle, if there is—and tell me all about it."

"No, no, no," returned Old Sol. "More than usual? No, no. What should there be the matter more than usual?"

Walter answered with an incredulous shake of his head. "That's what I want to know," he said, "and you ask *me!* I'll tell you what, uncle, when I see you like this, I am quite sorry that I live with you."

Old Sol opened his eyes involuntarily.

“Yes. Though nobody was ever happier than I am and always have been with you, I am quite sorry that I live with you, when I see you with anything on your mind.”

“I am a little dull at such times, I know,” observed Solomon, meekly rubbing his hands.

“What I mean, Uncle Sol,” pursued Walter, bending over a little more to pat him on the shoulder, “is, that then I feel you ought to have, sitting here and pouring out the tea, instead of me, a nice little dumpling of a wife, you know—a comfortable, capital, cosey old lady, who was just a match for you, and knew how to manage you, and keep you in good heart. Here am I, as loving a nephew as ever was (I am sure I ought to be!) but I am only a nephew, and I can’t be such a companion to you when you’re low and out of sorts as she would have made herself, years ago, though I am sure I’d give any money if I could cheer you up. And so I say, when I see you with anything on your mind, that I feel quite sorry you naven’t got somebody better about you than a blundering young rough-and-tough boy like me, who has got the will to console you, uncle, but hasn’t got the way—hasn’t got the way,” repeated Walter, reaching over further yet, to shake his uncle by the hand.

“Wally, my dear boy,” said Solomon, “if the cosey little old lady had taken her place in this parlour five-and forty years ago, I never could have been fonder of her than I am of you.”

“I know that, Uncle Sol,” returned Walter. “Lord bless you, I know that. But you wouldn’t have had the whole weight of any uncomfortable secrets if she had been with you, because she would have known how to relieve you of ’em, and I don’t.”

“Yes, yes, you do,” returned the instrument-maker.

“Well then, what’s the matter, Uncle Sol?” said Walter, coaxingly. “Come? What’s the matter?”

Solomon Gills persisted that there was nothing the matter; and maintained it so resolutely, that his nephew had no resource but to make a very indifferent imitation of believing him.

“All I can say is, Uncle Sol, that if there is—”

“But there isn’t,” said Solomon.

“Very well,” said Walter. “Then I’ve no more to say; and that’s lucky, for my time’s up for going to business. I shall look in bye-and-bye when I’m out, to see how you get on, uncle. And mind, uncle! I’ll never believe you again, and never tell you anything more about Mr. Carker the Junior, if I find out that you have been deceiving me!”

Solomon Gills laughingly defied him to find out any,

thing of the kind ; and Walter, revolving in his thoughts all sorts of impracticable ways of making fortunes and placing the wooden midshipman in a position of independence, betook himself to the offices of Dombey and Son with a heavier countenance than he usually carried there.

There lived in those days, round the corner—in Bishopsgate-street Without—one Brogley, sworn broker and appraiser, who kept a shop where every description of second-hand furniture was exhibited in the most uncomfortable aspect, and under circumstances and in combinations the most completely foreign to its purpose. Dozens of chairs hooked on to washing-stands, which with difficulty poised themselves on the shoulders of sideboards, which in their turn stood upon the wrong side of dining-tables, gymnastic with their legs upward on the tops of other dining-tables, were among its most reasonable arrangements. A banquet array of dish-covers, wine-glasses, and decanters, was generally to be seen spread forth upon the bosom of a four-post bedstead, for the entertainment of such genial company as half-a-dozen pokers, and a hall lamp. A set of window curtains, with no windows belonging to them, would be seen gracefully draping a barricade of chests of drawers, loaded with little jars from chemist's shops ; while a homeless hearth-rug, severed from its natural companion the fire-side, braved the shrewd east wind in its adversity, and trembled in melancholy accord with the shrill complainings of a cabinet piano, wasting away, a string a day, and faintly resounding to the noises of the street in its jangling and distracted brain. Of motionless clocks that never stirred a finger, and seemed as incapable of being successfully wound up, as the pecuniary affairs of their former owners, there was always great choice in Mr. Brogley's shop ; and various looking-glasses, accidentally placed at compound interest of reflection and refraction, presented to the eye an eternal perspective of bankruptcy and ruin.

Mr. Brogley himself was a moist-eyed, pink-complexioned, crisp-haired man, of a bulky figure and an easy temper—for that class of Caius Marius who sits upon the ruins of other people's Carthages, can keep up his spirits well enough. He had looked in at Solomon's shop sometimes, to ask a question about articles in Solomon's way of business ; and Walter knew himself sufficiently to give him good day when they met in the street, but as that was the extent of the broker's acquaintance with Solomon Gills also, Walter was not a little surprised when he came back in the course of the forenoon, agreeably to his promise, to find Mr. Brogley sitting in the back parlour with his hands in his pockets, and his hat hanging up behind the door.

“Well, Uncle Sol!” said Walter. The old man was sitting ruefully on the opposite side of the table, with his spectacles over his eyes, for a wonder, instead of on his forehead. “How are you now?”

Solomon shook his head, and waved one hand towards the broker, as introducing him.

“Is there anything the matter?” asked Walter, with a catching in his breath.

“No, no. There’s nothing the matter.” said Mr. Brogley. “Don’t let it put you out of the way.”

Walter looked from the broker to his uncle in mute amazement.

“The fact is,” said Mr. Brogley, “there’s a little payment on a bond debt—three hundred and seventy odd, over due : and I’m in possession.”

“In possession!” cried Walter, looking round at the shop.

“Ah!” said Mr. Brogley, in confidential assent, and nodding his head as if he would urge the advisability of their all being comfortably together. “It’s an execution. That’s what it is. Don’t let me put you out of the way. I come myself because of keeping it quiet and sociable. You know me. It’s quite private.”

“Uncle Sol!” faltered Walter.

“Wally, my boy,” returned his uncle. “It’s the first time. Such a calamity never happened to me before. I’m an old man to begin.” Pushing up his spectacles again (for they were useless any longer to conceal his emotion), he covered his face with his hands, and sobbed aloud, and his tears fell down upon his coffee-coloured waistcoat.

“Uncle Sol! Pray! oh don’t!” exclaimed Walter, who really felt a thrill of horror, in seeing the old man weep. “For God’s sake don’t do that. Mr. Brogley, what shall I do?”

“I should recommend your looking up a friend or so,” said Mr. Brogley, “and talking it over.”

“To be sure!” cried Walter, catching at anything. “Certainly! Thankee. Captain Cuttle’s the man, uncle. Wait till I run to Captain Cuttle. Keep your eye upon my uncle, will you, Mr. Brogley, and make him as comfortable as you can while I am gone? Don’t despair, Uncle Sol. Try and keep a good heart, there’s a dear fellow!”

Saying this with great fervour, and disregarding the old man’s broken remonstrances, Walter dashed out of the shop again as hard as he could go; and, having hurried round to the office to excuse himself on the plea of his uncle’s sudden illness, set off, full speed, for Captain Cuttle’s residence.

Everything seemed altered as he ran along the streets.

There was the usual entanglement and noise of carts, drays, omnibuses, waggons, and foot passengers, but the misfortune that had fallen on the wooden midshipman made it strange and new. Houses and shops were different from what they used to be, and bore Mr. Brogley's warrant on their fronts in large characters. The broker seemed to have got hold of the very churches; for their spires rose into the sky with an unwonted air. Even the sky itself was changed, and had an execution in it plainly.

Captain Cuttle lived on the brink of a little canal near the India Docks, where there was a swivel bridge which opened now and then to let some wandering monster of a ship come roaming up the street like a stranded leviathan. The gradual change from land to water, on the approach to Captain Cuttle's lodgings, was curious. It began with the erection of flag staffs, as appurtenances to public-houses; then came slopsellers' shops, with Guernsey shirts, sou'wester hats, and canvas pantaloons, at once the tightest and the loosest of their order, hanging up outside. These were succeeded by anchor and chain-cable forges, where sledge hammers were dinging upon iron all day long. Then came rows of houses, with little vane-surmounted masts uprearing themselves from among the scarlet beans. Then, ditches. Then, pollard willows. Then, more ditches. Then, unaccountable patches of dirty water, hardly to be described, for the ships that covered them. Then, the air was perfumed with chips; and all other trades were swallowed up in mast, oar, and block making, and boat building. Then, the ground grew marshy and unsettled. Then, there was nothing to be smelt but rum and sugar. Then, Captain Cuttle's lodgings—at once a first floor and a top story, in Brig-place—were close before you.

The captain was one of those timber-looking men, suits of oak as well as hearts, whom it is almost impossible for the liveliest imagination to separate from any part of their dress, however insignificant. Accordingly when Walter knocked at the door, and the captain instantly poked his head out of one of his little front windows, and hailed him, with the hard glazed hat already on it, and the shirt-collar like a sail, and the wide suit of blue all standing as usual, Walter was as fully persuaded that he was always in that state, as if the Captain had been a bird and those had been his feathers.

"Wal'r, my lad!" said Captain Cuttle. "Stand by and knock again. Hard! It's washing day."

Walter, in his impatience, gave a prodigious thump with the knocker.

"Hard it is!" said Captain Cuttle, and immediately drew in his head, as if he expected a squall.

Nor was he mistaken; for a widow lady, with her sleeves rolled up to her shoulders, and her arms frothy with soap-suds and smoking with hot-water, replied to the summons with startling rapidity. Before she looked at Walter she looked at the knocker, and then, measuring him with her eyes from head to foot, said she wondered he had left any of it.

"Captain Cuttle's at home, I know," said Walter, with a conciliatory smile.

"Is he?" replied the widow lady. "In-deed!"

"He has just been speaking to me," said Walter, in breathless explanation.

"Has he?" replied the widow lady. "Then p'raps you'll give him Mrs. MacStinger's respects and say that the next time he lowers himself and his lodgings by talking out of winder, she'll thank him to come down and open the door too." Mrs. MacStinger spoke loud, and listened for any observations that might be offered from the first floor.

"I'll mention it," said Walter, "if you'll have the goodness to let me in, ma'am."

For he was repelled by a wooden fortification extending across the doorway, and put there to prevent the little MacStingers in their moments of recreation from tumbling down the steps.

"A boy that can knock my door down," said Mrs. MacStinger, contemptuously, "can get over that, I should hope!" But Walter, taking this as a permission to enter, and getting over it, Mrs. MacStinger immediately demanded whether an Englishwoman's house was her castle or not; and whether she was to be broke in upon by 'raff.' On these subjects her thirst for information was still very importunate, when Walter, having made his way up the little staircase through an artificial fog occasioned by the washing, which covered the banisters with a clammy perspiration, entered Captain Cuttle's room, and found that gentleman in ambush behind the door.

"Never owed her a penny, Wal'r," said Captain Cuttle, in a low voice, and with visible marks of trepidation on his countenance. "Done her a world of good turns, and the children too. Vixen at times, though. Whew!"

"I should go away, Captain Cuttle," said Walter.

"Dursn't do it, Wal'r," returned the captain. "She'd find me out, wherever I went. Sit down. How's Gills?"

The captain was dining (in his hat) off cold loin of mutton, porter, and some smoking hot potatoes, which he had cooked himself, and took out of a little saucepan before the fire as he wanted them. He unscrewed his hook at dinner-time, and screwed a knife into its wooden socket instead, with which he had already begun to peel

one of these potatoes for Walter. His rooms were very small, and strongly impregnated with tobacco-smoke, but snug enough : everything being stowed away, as if there were an earthquake regularly every half hour.

"How's Gills?" inquired the captain.

Walter, who had by this time recovered his breath, and lost his spirits—or such temporary spirits as his rapid journey had given him—looked at his questioner for a moment, said "Oh, Captain Cuttle!" and burst into tears.

No words can describe the captain's consternation at this sight. Mrs. MacStinger faded into nothing before it. He dropped the potato and the fork—and would have dropped the knife too if he could—and sat gazing at the boy, as if he expected to hear next moment that a gulf had opened in the city, which had swallowed up his old friend, coffee-coloured suit, buttons, chronometer, spectacles, and all.

But when Walter told him what was really the matter, Captain Cuttle, after a moment's reflection, started up into full activity. He emptied out of a little tin canister on the top shelf of the cupboard, his whole stock of ready money (amounting to thirteen pounds and half-a-crown), which he transferred to one of the pockets of his square blue coat : further enriched that repository with the contents of his plate chest, consisting of two withered atomies of tea-spoons, and an obsolete pair of knock-knee'd sugar-tongs ; pulled up his immense double-cased silver watch from the depths in which it reposed, to assure himself that that valuable was sound and whole ; re-attached the hook to his right wrist : and seizing the stick covered over with knobs, bade Walter come along.

Remembering, however, in the midst of his virtuous excitement, that Mrs. MacStinger might be lying in wait below, Captain Cuttle hesitated at last, not without glancing at the window, as if he had some thought of escaping by that unusual means of egress, rather than encounter his terrible enemy. He decided, however, in favour of stratagem.

"Wal'r," said the captain, with a timid wink, "go afore, my lad. Sing out, 'good bye, Captain Cuttle,' when you're in the passage, and shut the door. Then wait at the corner of the street 'till you see me."

These directions were not issued without a previous knowledge of the enemy's tactics, for when Walter got down-stairs, Mrs. MacStinger glided out of the little back kitchen, like an avenging spirit. But not gliding out upon the captain, as she had expected, she merely made a further allusion to the knocker, and glided in again.

Some five minutes elapsed before Captain Cuttle could summon courage to attempt his escape; for Walter waited so long at the street corner, looking back at the house, before there were any symptoms of the hard glazed hat. At length the captain burst out of the door with the suddenness of an explosion, and coming towards him at a great pace, and never once looking over his shoulder, pretended as soon as they were well out of the street, to whistle a tune.

"Uncle much hove down, Wal'r?" inquired the captain as they were walking along.

"I am afraid so. If you had seen him this morning, you would never have forgotten it."

"Walk fast, Wal'r my lad," returned the captain, mending his pace; "and walk the same all the days of your life. Over-haul the catechism for that advice, and keep it!"

The captain was too busy with his own thoughts of Solomon Gills, mingled perhaps with some reflections on his late escape from Mrs. MacStinger, to offer any further quotations on the way for Walter's moral improvement. They interchanged no other word until they arrived at old Sol's door, where the unfortunate wooden midshipman, with his instrument at his eye, seemed to be surveying the whole horizon in search of some friend to help him out of his difficulty.

"Gills!" said the captain, hurrying into the back parlour, and taking him by the hand quite tenderly. "Lay your head well to the wind, and we'll fight through it. All you've got to do," said the captain, with the solemnity of a man who was delivering himself of one of the most precious practical tenets ever discovered by human wisdom, "is to lay your head well to the wind, and we'll fight through it!"

Old Sol returned the pressure of his hand, and thanked him.

Captain Cuttle, then, with a gravity suitable to the nature of the occasion, put down upon the table the two tea-spoons and the sugar-tongs, the silver watch, and the ready money; and asked Mr. Brogley, the broker, what the damage was.

"Come! What do you make of it?" said Captain Cuttle.

"Why, Lord help you!" returned the broker; "you don't suppose that property's of any use, do you?"

"Why not?" inquired the captain.

"Why? The amount's three hundred and seventy, odd," replied the broker.

"Never mind," returned the captain, though he was evidently dismayed by the figures: "all's fish that comes to your net, I suppose?"

“Certainly,” said Mr. Brogley. “But sprats an’t whales, you know.”

The philosophy of this observation seemed to strike the captain. He ruminated for a minute; eyeing the broker, meanwhile, as a deep genius; and then called the instrument-maker aside.

“Gills,” said Captain Cuttle, “what’s the bearings of this business? Who’s the creditor?”

“Hush!” returned the old man. “Come away. Don’t speak before Wally. It’s a matter of security for Wally’s father—an old bond. I’ve paid a good deal of it, Ned, but the times are so bad with me that I can’t do more just now. I’ve foreseen it, but I couldn’t help it. Not a word before Wally, for all the world.”

“You’ve got *some* money, haven’t you?” whispered the captain.

“Yes, yes—oh yes—I’ve got some,” returned old Sol, first putting his hands into his empty pockets, and then squeezing his Welsh wig between them, as if he thought he might wring some gold out of it; “but I—the little I have got, isn’t convertible, Ned; it can’t be got at. I have been trying to do something with it for Wally, and I’m old-fashioned, and behind the time. It’s here and there, and—and, in short, it’s as good as nowhere,” said the old man, looking in bewilderment about him.

He had so much the air of a half-witted person who had been hiding his money in a variety of places, and had forgotten where, that the captain followed his eyes, not without a faint hope that he might remember some few hundred pounds concealed up the chimney, or down in the cellar. But Solomon Gills knew better than that.

“I’m behind the time altogether, my dear Ned,” said Sol, in resigned despair, “a long way. It’s no use my lagging on so far behind it. The stock had better be sold—it’s worth more than this debt—and I had better go and die somewhere on the balance. I haven’t any energy left. I don’t understand things. This had better be the end of it. Let ’em sell the stock and take *him* down,” said the old man, pointing feebly to the wooden midshipman, “and let us both be broken up together.”

“And what d’ye mean to do with Wal’r?” said the captain. “There, there! Sit ye down, Gills, sit ye down, and let me think o’ this. If I warn’t a man on a small annuity, that was large enough till to-day, I hadn’t need to think of it. But you only lay your head well to the wind,” said the captain, again administering that unanswerable piece of consolation, “and you’re all right!”

Old Sol thanked him from his heart, and went and laid it against the back parlour fire-place instead.

Captain Cuttle walked up and down the shop for some time, cogitating profoundly, and bringing his bushy black eyebrows to bear so heavily on his nose, like clouds settling on a mountain, that Walter was afraid to offer any interruption to the current of his reflections. Mr. Brogley, who was averse to being any constraint upon the party, and who had an ingenious cast of mind, went, softly whistling, among the stock; rattling weather glasses, shaking compasses as if they were phisic, catching up keys with loadstones, looking through telescopes, endeavouring to make himself acquainted with the use of the globes, setting parallel rulers astride on to his nose, and amusing himself with other philosophical transactions.

“Wal’r!” said the captain at last. “I’ve got it.”

“Have you, Captain Cuttle?” cried Walter, with great animation.

“Come this way, my lad,” said the captain. “The stock’s one security. I’m another. Your governor’s the man to advance the money.”

“Mr. Dombey!” faltered Walter.

The captain nodded gravely. “Look at him,” he said. “Look at Gills. If they was to sell off these things now, he’d die of it. You know he would. We mustn’t leave a stone unturned—and there’s a stone for you.”

“A stone!—Mr. Dombey!” faltered Walter.

“You run round to the office, first of all, and see if he’s there,” said Captain Cuttle, clapping him on the back. “Quick!”

Walter felt he must not dispute the command—a glance at his uncle would have determined him if he had felt otherwise—and disappeared to execute it. He soon returned, out of breath, to say that Mr. Dombey was not there. It was Saturday, and he had gone to Brighton.

“I tell you what, Wal’r!” said the captain, who seemed to have prepared himself for this contingency in his absence. “We’ll go to Brighton. I’ll back you, my boy. I’ll back you, Wal’r. We’ll go to Brighton by the afternoon’s coach.”

If the application must be made to Mr. Dombey at all, which was awful to think of, Walter felt that he would rather prefer it alone and unassisted, than backed by the personal influence of Captain Cuttle, to which he hardly thought Mr. Dombey would attach much weight. But as the captain appeared to be of quite another opinion, and was bent upon it, and as his friendship was too zealous and serious to be trifled with by one so much younger than himself, he forebore to hint the least objection. Cuttle, therefore, taking a hurried leave of Solomon Gills, and returning the ready money, the tea-

spoons, the sugar-tongs, and the silver watch, to his pocket—with a view, as Walter thought, with horror, to making a gorgeous impression on Mr. Dombey—bore him off to the coach-office, without a minute's delay, and repeatedly assured him, on the road, that he would stick by him to the last.

CHAPTER X.

Containing the Sequel of the Midshipman's Disaster.

MAJOR BAGSTOCK, after long and frequent observation of Paul, across Princess's-place, through his double barrelled opera glass; and after receiving many minute reports, daily, weekly, and monthly, on that subject, from the native, who kept himself in constant communication with Miss Tox's maid for that purpose; came to the conclusion that Dombey, sir, was a man to be known, and that J. B. was the boy to make his acquaintance.

Miss Tox, however, maintaining her reserved behaviour, and frigidly declining to understand the major whenever he called (which he often did) on any little fishing excursion connected with this project, the major, in spite of his constitutional toughness and slyness, was fain to leave the accomplishment of his desire in some measure to chance, "which," as he was used to observe with chuckles at his club, "has been fifty to one in favour of Joey B., sir, ever since his elder brother died of Yellow Jack in the West Indies."

It was some time coming to his aid in the present instance, but it befriended him at last. When the dark servant, with full particulars, reported Miss Tox absent on Brighton service, the major was suddenly touched with affectionate reminiscences of his friend Bill Bitherstone of Bengal, who had written to ask him, if he ever went that way, to bestow a call upon his only son. But when the same dark servant reported Paul at Mrs. Pipchin's, and the major, referring to the letter favoured by Master Bitherstone on his arrival in England—to which he had never had the least idea of paying any attention—saw the opening that presented itself, he was made so rabid by the gout, with which he happened to be then laid up, that he threw a footstool at the dark servant in return for his intelligence, and swore he would be the death of the rascal before he had done with him: which the dark servant was more than half disposed to believe.

At length the major being released from his fit, went one Saturday growling down to Brighton, with the native

behind him : apostrophising Miss Tox all the way, and gloating over the prospect of carrying by storm the distinguished friend to whom she attached so much mystery, and for whom she had deserted him.

“Would you, ma’am, would you !” said the major, straining with vindictiveness, and swelling every already swollen vein in his head. “Would you give Joey B. the go-by, ma’am ? Not yet, ma’am, not yet ! Damme, not yet, sir. Joe is awake, ma’am. Bagstock is alive, sir. J. B. knows a move or two, ma’am. Josh has his weather-eye open, sir. You’ll find him tough, ma’am. Tough, sir, tough is Joseph. Tough, and de-vil-ish sly !”

And very tough indeed Master Bitherstone found him, when he took that young gentleman out for a walk. But the major, with his complexion like a Stilton cheese, and his eyes like a prawn’s, went roving about, perfectly indifferent to Master Bitherstone’s amusement, and dragging Master Bitherstone along, while he looked about him high and low for Mr. Dombey and his children.

In good time the major, previously instructed by Mrs. Pipchin, spied out Paul and Florence, and bore down upon them ; there being a stately gentleman (Mr. Dombey, doubtless) in the company. Charging with Master Bitherstone into the very heart of the little squadron, it fell out, of course, that Master Bitherstone spoke to his fellow-sufferers. Upon that the major stopped to notice and admire them ; remembered with amazement that he had seen and spoken to them at his friend Miss Tox’s in Princess’s-place : opined that Paul was a devilish fine fellow, and his own little friend ; inquired if he remembered Joey B. the major ; and finally, with a sudden recollection of the conventionalities of life, turned and apologised to Mr. Dombey.

“But my little friend here, sir,” said the major, “makes a boy of me again. An old soldier, sir—Major Bagstock, at your service—is not ashamed to confess it.” Here the major lifted his hat. “Damme, sir,” cried the major with sudden warmth, “I envy you.” Then he recollected himself, and added, “Excuse my freedom.”

Mr. Dombey begged he wouldn’t mention it.

“An old campaigner, sir,” said the major, “a smoke-dried, sun-burnt, used-up, invalided old dog of a major, sir, was not afraid of being condemned for his whim by a man like Mr. Dombey. I have the honour of addressing Mr. Dombey, I believe !”

“I am the present unworthy representative of that name, major,” returned Mr. Dombey.

“By G—, sir,” said the major, “it’s a great name. It’s a name, sir,” said the major firmly, as if he deuded Mr. Dombey to contradict him, and would feel it his

painful duty to bully him if he did, "that is known and honoured in the British possessions abroad. It is a name, sir, that a man is proud to recognise. There is nothing adulatory in Joseph Bagstock, sir. His Royal Highness the Duke of York observed on more than one occasion 'there is no adulation in Joey. He is a plain old soldier is Joe. He is tough to a fault is Joseph:' but it's a great name, sir. By the Lord, it's a great name!" said the major, solemnly.

"You are good enough to rate it higher than it deserves perhaps, major," returned Mr. Dombey.

"No, sir," said the major. "My little friend here, sir, will certify for Joseph Bagstock that he is a thorough-going, down-right, plain-spoken, old Trump, sir, and nothing more. That boy, sir," said the major in a low tone, "will live in history. That boy, sir, is not a common production. Take care of him, Mr. Dombey."

Mr. Dombey seemed to intimate that he would endeavour to do so,

"Here is a boy here, sir," pursued the major, confidentially, and giving him a thrust with his cane. "Son of Bitherstone of Bengal. Bill Bitherstone formerly of ours. That boy's father and myself, sir, were sworn friends. Wherever you went, sir, you heard of nothing but Bill Bitherstone and Joe Bagstock. Am I blind to that boy's defects? By no means. He's a fool, sir."

Mr. Dombey glanced at the libelled Master Bitherstone of whom he knew at least as much as the major did, and said, in quite a complacent manner, "Really?"

"That is what he is, sir," said the major. "He's a fool. Joe Bagstock never minces matters. The son of my old friend Bill Bitherstone of Bengal is a born fool, sir." Here the major laughed till he was almost black. "My little friend is destined for a public school, I presume, Mr. Dombey?" said the major when he had recovered.

"I am not quite decided," returned Mr. Dombey. "I think not. He is delicate."

"If he's delicate, sir," said the major, "you are right. None but the tough fellows could live through it, sir, at Sandhurst. We put each other to the torture there, sir. We roasted the new fellows at a slow fire, and hung 'em out of a three pair of stairs window, with their heads downwards. Joseph Bagstock, sir, was held out of the window by the heels of his boots for thirteen minutes by the college clock."

The major might have appealed to his countenance in corroboration of this story. It certainly looked as if he had hung out a little too long.

"But it made us what we were, sir," said the major,

settling his shirt frill. "We were iron, sir," and it forged us. Are you remaining here, Mr. Dombey?"

"I generally come down once a week, major," returned that gentleman. "I stay at the Bedford."

"I shall have the honour of calling at the Bedford, sir, if you'll permit me," said the major. "Joey B, sir, is not in general a calling man, but Mr. Dombey's is not a common name. I am much indebted to my little friend, sir, for the honour of this introduction."

Mr. Dombey made a very gracious reply; and Major Bagstock, having patted Paul on the head, and said of Florence that her eyes would play the devil with the youngsters before long—"and the oldsters too, sir, if you come to that," added the major, chuckling very much—stirred up Master Bitherstone with his walking-stick, and departed with that young gentleman, at a kind of half-trot; rolling his head and coughing with great dignity, as he staggered away, with his legs very wide asunder.

In fulfilment of his promise, the major afterwards called on Mr. Dombey; and Mr. Dombey, having referred to the army list, afterwards called on the major. Then the major called at Mr. Dombey's house in town; and came down again, in the same coach as Mr. Dombey. In short, Mr. Dombey and the major got on uncommonly well together, and uncommonly fast; and Mr. Dombey observed of the major, to his sister, that besides being quite a military man he was really something more, as he had a very admirable idea of the importance of things unconnected with his own profession.

At length Mr. Dombey, bringing down Miss Tox and Mrs. Chick to see the children, and finding the major again at Brighton, invited him to dinner at the Bedford, and complimented Miss Tox highly, beforehand, on her neighbour and acquaintance. Notwithstanding the palpitation of the heart which these allusions occasioned her, they were anything but disagreeable to Miss Tox, as they enabled her to be extremely interesting, and to manifest an occasional incoherence and distraction which she was not at all unwilling to display. The major gave her abundant opportunities of exhibiting this emotion being profuse in his complaints, at dinner, of her desertion of him and Princess's-place: and as he appeared to derive great enjoyment from making them, they all got on very well.

None the worse on account of the major taking charge of the whole conversation, and showing as great an appetite in that respect as in regard of the various dainties on the table, among which he may be almost said to have wallowed: greatly to the aggravation of his inflammatory tendencies. Mr. Dombey's habitual silence and reserve

yielding readily to this usurpation, the major felt that he was coming out and shining: and in the flow of spirits thus engendered, rang such an infinite number of new changes on his own name that he quite astonished himself. In a word, they were all very well pleased. The major was considered to possess an inexhaustible fund of conversation; and when he took a late farewell, after a long rubber, Mr. Dombey again complimented the blushing Miss Tox on her neighbour and acquaintance.

But all the way home to his own hotel, the major incessantly said to himself, and of himself, "Sly, sir—sly, sir—de-vil-ish sly!" And when he got there, sat down in a chair, and fell into a silent fit of laughter, with which he was sometimes seized, and which was always particularly awful. It held him so long on this occasion that the dark servant, who stood watching him at a distance, but dared not for his life approach, twice or thrice gave him over for lost. His whole form, but especially his face and head, dilated beyond all former experience; and presented to the dark man's view, nothing but a heaving mass of indigo. At length he burst into a violent paroxysm of coughing, and when that was a little better burst into such ejaculations as the following:

"Would you, ma'am, would you? Mrs. Dombey, eh ma'am? I think not, ma'am. Not while Joe B. can put a spoke in your wheel, ma'am. J. B.'s even with you now, ma'am. He isn't altogether bowled out, yet, sir, isn't Bagstock. She's deep, sir, deep, but Josh is deeper. Wide awake is old Joe—broad awake, and staring, sir!" There was no doubt of this last assertion being true, and to a very fearful extent; as it continued to be during the greater part of that night, which the major chiefly passed in similar exclamations, diversified with fits of coughing and choking that startled the whole house.

It was on the day after this occasion (being Sunday) when, as Mr. Dombey, Mrs. Chick, and Miss Tox were sitting at breakfast, still eulogising the major, Florence came running in; her face suffused with a bright colour, and her eyes sparkling joyfully; and cried,

"Papa! Papa! Here's Walter! and he won't come in."

"Who?" cried Mr. Dombey. "What does she mean? What is this?"

"Walter, papa," said Florence timidly; sensible of having approached the presence with too much familiarity. "Who found me when I was lost."

"Does she mean young Gay, Louisa?" inquired Mr. Dombey, knitting his brows. "Really, this child's manners have become very boisterous. She cannot mean young Gay, I think. See what it is, will you?"

Mrs. Chick hurried into the passage, and returned with the information that it was young Gay, accompanied by



SAT DOWN IN A CHAIR, AND FELL INTO A SILENT FIT OF LAUGHTER.
—Dombey and Son, Vol. Eleven, page 459.

a very strange-looking person ; and that young Gay said he would not take the liberty of coming in, hearing Mr. Dombey was at breakfast, but would wait until Mr. Dombey should signify that he might approach.

"Tell the boy to come in now," said Mr. Dombey. "Now, Gay, what is the matter? Who sent you down here? Was there nobody else to come?"

"I beg your pardon, sir," returned Walter. "I have not been sent. I have been so bold as to come on my own account, which I hope you'll pardon when I mention the cause."

But Mr. Dombey without attending to what he said, was looking impatiently on either side of him (as if he were a pillar in his way) at some object behind.

"What's that?" said Mr. Dombey. "Who is that? I think you have made some mistake in the door, sir."

"Oh, I'm very sorry to intrude with any one, sir," cried Walter, hastily: "but this is—this is Captain Cuttle, sir."

"Wal'r, my lad," observed the captain in a deep voice, "stand by!"

At the same time the captain, coming a little farther in, brought out his wide suit of blue, his conspicuous shirt-collar, and his nobby nose in full relief, and stood bowing to Mr. Dombey, and waving his hook politely to the ladies, with the hard glazed hat in his one hand, and a red equator round his head which it had newly imprinted there.

Mr. Dombey regarded this phenomenon with amazement and indignation, and seemed by his looks to appeal to Mrs. Chick and Miss Tox against it. Little Paul, who had come in after Florence, backed towards Miss Tox as the captain waved his hook, and stood on the defensive.

"Now, Gay," said Mr. Dombey. "What have you got to say to me?"

Again the captain observed, as a general opening of the conversation that could not fail to propitiate all parties, "Wal'r, stand by!"

"I am afraid, sir," began Walter, trembling and looking down at the ground, "that I take a very great liberty in coming—indeed, I am sure I do. I should hardly have had the courage to ask to see you, sir, even after coming down, I am afraid, if I had not overtaken Miss Dombey, and—"

"Well!" said Mr. Dombey, following his eyes as he glanced at the attentive Florence, and frowning unconsciously as she encouraged him with a smile. "Go on, if you please."

"Aye, aye," observed the captain, considering it incumbent on him, as a point of good breeding, to support Mr. Dombey. "Well said! Go on, Wal'r."

Captain Cuttle ought to have been withered by the look which Mr. Dombey bestowed upon him in acknowledgment of his patronage. But quite innocent of this, he closed one eye in reply, and gave Mr. Dombey to understand, by certain significant motions of his hook, that Walter was a little bashful at first, and might be expected to come out shortly.

"It is entirely a private and personal matter that has brought me here, sir," continued Walter, faltering, "and Captain Cuttle—"

"Here!" interposed the captain, as an assurance that he was at hand, and might be relied upon.

"Who is a very old friend of my poor uncle's, and a most excellent man, sir," pursued Walter, raising his eyes with a look of entreaty in the captain's behalf, "was so good as to offer to come with me, which I could hardly refuse."

"No, no, no," observed the captain complacently. "Of course not. No call for refusing. Go on, Wal'r."

"And therefore, sir," said Walter, venturing to meet Mr. Dombey's eyes and proceeding with better courage in the very desperation of the case, now that there was no avoiding it, "therefore I have come with him, sir, to say that my poor old uncle is in very great affliction and distress. That through the gradual loss of his business, and not being able to make a payment, the apprehension of which has weighed very heavily upon his mind, months and months, as indeed I know, sir, he has an execution in his house, and is danger of losing all he has, and breaking his heart. And that if you would, in your kindness, and in your old knowledge of him as a respectable man, do anything to help him out of his difficulty, sir, we never could thank you enough for it."

Walter's filled with tears as he spoke; and so did those of Florence. Her father saw them glistening, though he appeared to look at Walter only.

"It is a very large sum, sir," said Walter. "More than three hundred pounds. My uncle is quite beaten down by his misfortune, it lies so heavy on him; and is quite unable to do anything for his own relief. He doesn't even know yet that I have come to speak to you. You would wish me to say, sir," added Walter, after a moment's hesitation, "exactly what it is I want. I really don't know, sir. There is my uncle's stock, on which I believe I may say, confidently, there are no other demands, and there is Captain Cuttle, who would wish to be security too. I—I hardly like to mention," said Walter, "Such earnings as mine; but if you will allow them—accumulate—payment—advance—uncle—frugal, honourable old man." Walter trailed off through these

broken sentences, into silence, and stood, with down-cast head, before his employer.

Considering this a favourable moment for the display of the valuables, Captain Cuttle advanced to the table; and clearing a space among the breakfast-cups at Mr. Dombey's elbow, produced the silver watch, the ready money, the teaspoons, and the sugar-tongs; and piling them into a heap that they might look as precious as possible, delivered himself of these words:

"Half a loaf's better than no bread, and the same remark holds good with crumbs. There's a few. Annuity of one hundred pound prannum also ready to be made over. If there is a man chock full of science in the world, it's old Sol Gills. If there is a lad of promise—one flowing," added the captain, in one of his happy quotations, "with milk and honey—it's his nevy!"

The captain then withdrew to his former place, where he stood arranging his scattered locks with the air of a man who had given the finishing touch to a difficult performance.

When Walter ceased to speak, Mr. Dombey's eyes were attracted to little Paul, who, seeing his sister hanging down her head and silently weeping in her commiseration for the distress she had heard described, went over to her, and tried to comfort her: looking at Walter and his father as he did so, with a very expressive face. After the momentary distraction of Captain Cuttle's address, which he regarded with lofty indifference, Mr. Dombey again turned his eyes upon his son, and sat steadily regarding the child, for some moments, in silence.

"What was this debt contracted for?" asked Mr. Dombey, at length. "Who is the creditor?"

"He don't know," replied the captain, putting his hand on Walter's shoulder. "I do. It came of helping a man that's dead now, and that's cost my friend Gills many a hundred pound already. More particulars in private, if agreeable."

"People who have enough to do to hold their own way," said Mr. Dombey, unobservant of the captain's mysterious signs behind Walter, and still looking at his son, "had better be content with their own obligations and difficulties, and not increase them by engaging for other men. It is an act of dishonesty, and presumption too," said Mr. Dombey, sternly; "great presumption; for the wealthy could do no more. Paul, come here!"

The child obeyed: and Mr. Dombey took him on his knee.

"If you had money now—" said Mr. Dombey. "Look at me!"

Paul, whose eyes had wandered to his sister, and to Walter, looked his father in the face.

“If you had money now—” said Mr. Dombey; “as much money as young Gay has talked about; what would you do?”

“Give it to his old uncle,” returned Paul.

“Lend it to his uncle, eh?” retorted Mr. Dombey. “Well! When you are old enough, you know you will share my money, and we shall use it together.”

“Dombey and Son,” interrupted Paul, who had been tutored early in the phrase.

“Dombey and Son,” repeated his father. “Would you like to begin to be Dombey and Son now, and lend this money to young Gay’s uncle?”

“Oh! if you please papa!” said Paul; “and so would Florence.”

“Girls,” said Mr. Dombey, “have nothing to do with Dombey and Son. Would *you* like it?”

“Yes, papa, yes!”

“Then you shall do it,” returned his father. “And you see, Paul,” he added, dropping his voice, “how powerful money is, and how anxious people are to get it. Young Gay comes all this way to beg for money, and you, who are so grand and great, having got it, are going to let him have it as a great favour and obligation.”

Paul turned up the old face for a moment, in which there was a sharp understanding of the reference conveyed in these words: but it was a young and childish face immediately afterwards, when he slipped down from his father’s knee, and ran to tell Florence not to cry any more, for he was going to let young Gay have the money.

Mr. Dombey then turned to a side-table, and wrote a note and sealed it. During the interval, Paul and Florence whispered to Walter, and Captain Cuttle beamed on the three with such aspiring and ineffably presumptuous thoughts as Mr. Dombey never could have believed in. The note being finished, Mr. Dombey turned round to his former place, and held it out to Walter.

“Give that,” he said, “the first thing to-morrow morning, to Mr. Carker. He will immediately take care that one of my people releases your uncle from his present position, by paying the amount at issue; and that such arrangements are made for its repayment as may be consistent with your uncle’s circumstances. You will consider that this is done for you by Master Paul.”

Walter, in the emotion of holding in his hand the means of releasing his good uncle from his trouble, would have endeavoured to express something of his gratitude and joy. But Mr. Dombey stopped him short.

“You will consider that it is done,” he repeated, “by Master Paul. I have explained that to him, and he understands it. I wish no more to be said.”

As he motioned towards the door, Walter could only bow his head and retire. Miss Tox, seeing that the captain appeared about to do the same, interposed.

"My dear sir," she said, addressing Mr. Dombey, at whose munificence both she and Mrs. Chick were shedding tears copiously; "I think you have overlooked something. Pardon me, Mr. Dombey, I think in the nobility of your character, and its exalted scope, you have omitted a matter of detail."

"Indeed, Miss Tox!" said Mr. Dombey.

"The gentleman with the —— Instrument," pursued Miss Tox, glancing at Captain Cuttle, "has left upon the table, at your elbow——"

"Good Heaven!" said Mr. Dombey, sweeping the captain's property from him, as if it were so much crumb indeed. "Take these things away. I am obliged to you, Miss Tox; it is like your usual discretion. Have the goodness to take these things away, sir!"

Captain Cuttle felt he had no alternative but to comply. But he was so much struck by the magnanimity of Mr. Dombey, in refusing treasures lying heaped up to his hand, that when he had deposited the teaspoons and sugar-tongs in one pocket, and the ready money in another, and had lowered the great watch down slowly into its proper vault, he could not refrain from seizing that gentleman's right hand in his own solitary left, and while he held it open with his powerful fingers, bringing the hook down upon its palm in a transport of admiration. At this touch of warm feeling and cold iron, Mr. Dombey shivered all over.

Captain Cuttle then kissed his hook to the ladies several times, with great elegance and gallantry; and having taken a particular leave of Paul and Florence, accompanied Walter out of the room. Florence was running after them in the earnestness of her heart, to send some message to old Sol, when Mr. Dombey called her back, and bade her stay where she was.

"Will you *never* be a Dombey, my dear child!" said Mrs. Chick with pathetic reproachfulness.

"Dear aunt," said Florence. "Don't be angry with me. I am so thankful to papa!"

She would have run and thrown her arms about his neck if she had dared; but as she did not dare, she glanced with thankful eyes towards him, as he sat musing; sometimes bestowing an uneasy glance on her, but for the most part, watching Paul, who walked about the room with the new-blown dignity of having let young Gay have the money.

And young Gay—Walter—what of him?

He was overjoyed to purge the old man's hearth from bailiffs and brokers, and to hurry back to his uncle with

the good tidings. He was overjoyed to have it all arranged and settled next day before noon; and to sit down at evening in the little back parlour with Old Sol and Captain Cuttle; and to see the Instrument-maker already reviving, and hopeful for the future, and feeling that the wooden midshipman was his own again. But without the least impeachment of his gratitude to Mr. Dombey, it must be confessed that Walter was humbled and cast down. It is when our budding hopes are nipped beyond recovery by some rough wind, that we are the most disposed to picture to ourselves what flowers they might have borne, if they had flourished; and now, when Walter felt himself cut off from that great Dombey height by the depth of a new and terrible tumble, and felt that all his old wild fancies had been scattered to the winds in the fall, he began to suspect that they might have led him on to harmless visions of aspiring to Florence in the remote distance of time.

The captain viewed the subject in quite a different light. He appeared to entertain a belief that the interview at which he had assisted was so very satisfactory and encouraging, as to be only a step or two removed from a regular betrothal of Florence to Walter; and that the late transaction had immensely forwarded, if not thoroughly established, the Whittingtonian hopes. Stimulated by this conviction, and by the improvement in the spirits of his old friend, and by his own consequent gaiety, he even attempted, in favouring them with the ballad of "Lovely Peg" for the third time in one evening, to make an extemporaneous substitution of the name "Florence;" but finding this difficult, on account of the word Peg invariably rhyming to leg (in which personal beauty the original was described as having excelled all competitors), he hit upon the happy thought of changing it to Fle—e—eg; which he accordingly did, with an archness almost supernatural, and a voice quite vociferous, notwithstanding that the time was close at hand when he must seek the abode of the dreadful Mrs. MacStinger.

CHAPTER XI.

Paul's Introduction to a New Scene.

MRS. PIPCHIN'S constitution was made of such hard metal, in spite of its liability to the fleshly weaknesses of standing in need of repose after chops, and of requiring to be coaxed to sleep by the soporific agency of sweet-breads, that it utterly set at nought the predictions of

Mrs. Wickam, and showed no symptoms of decline. Yet, as Paul's rapt interest in the old lady continued unabated, Mrs. Wickam would not budge an inch from the position she had taken up. Fortifying and entrenching herself on the strong ground of her uncle's Betsey Jane, she advised Miss Berry, as a friend, to prepare herself for the worst; and forewarned her that her aunt might, at any time, be expected to go off suddenly, like a powder-mill.

Poor Berry took it all in good part, and drudged and slaved away as usual; perfectly convinced that Mrs. Pipchin was one of the most meritorious persons in the world, and making every day innumerable sacrifices of herself upon the altar of that noble old woman. But all these immolations of Berry were somehow carried to the credit of Mrs. Pipchin by Mrs. Pipchin's friends and admirers; and were made to harmonise with, and carry out, that melancholy fact of the deceased Mr. Pipchin having broken his heart in the Peruvian mines.

For example, there was an honest grocer and general dealer in the retail line of business, between whom and Mrs. Pipchin there was a small memorandum book, with a greasy red cover, perpetually in question, and concerning which divers secret councils and conferences were continually being held between the parties to the register, on the mat in the passage, and with closed doors in the parlour. Nor were there wanting dark hints from Master Bitherstone (whose temper had been made revengeful by the solar heats of India acting on his blood), of balances unsettled, and of a failure, on one occasion within his memory, in the supply of moist sugar at tea-time. This grocer being a bachelor, and not a man who looked upon the surface for beauty, had once made honourable offers for the hand of Berry, which Mrs. Pipchin had with contumely and scorn, rejected. Everybody said how laudable this was in Mrs. Pipchin, relict of a man who had died of the Peruvian mines; and what a staunch, high, independent spirit, the old lady had. But nobody said anything about poor Berry, who cried for six weeks (being soundly rated by her good aunt all the time), and lapsed into a state of hopeless spinsterhood.

"Berry's very fond of you, ain't she?" Paul once asked Mrs. Pipchin when they were sitting by the fire with the cat.

"Yes," said Mrs. Pipchin.

"Why?" asked Paul.

"Why!" returned the disconcerted old lady. "How can you ask such things, sir! why are you fond of your sister Florence?"

"Because she's very good," said Paul. "There's nobody like Florence."

“Well!” retorted Mrs. Pipchin, shortly, “and there’s nobody like me, I suppose.”

“Ain’t there really though?” asked Paul leaning forward in his chair, and looking at her very hard.

“No,” said the old lady.

“I am glad of that,” observed Paul, rubbing his hands thoughtfully. “That’s a very good thing.”

Mrs. Pipchin didn’t dare to ask him why, lest she should receive some perfectly annihilating answer. But as a compensation to her wounded feelings, she harassed Master Bitherstone to that extent until bed-time, that he began that very night to make arrangements for an overland return to India, by secreting from his supper a quarter of a round of bread and a fragment of moist Dutch cheese, as the beginning of a stock of provision to support him on the voyage.

Mrs. Pipchin had kept watch and ward over little Paul and his sister for nearly twelve months. They had been home twice, but only for a few days; and had been constant in their weekly visits to Mr. Dombey at the hotel. By little and little Paul had grown stronger, and had become able to dispense with his carriage; though he still looked thin and delicate; and still remained the same old, quiet, dreamy child, that he had been when first consigned to Mrs. Pipchin’s care. One Saturday afternoon, at dusk, great consternation was occasioned in the castle by the unlooked-for announcement of Mr. Dombey as a visitor to Mrs. Pipchin. The population of the parlour was immediately swept up-stairs as on the wings of a whirlwind, and after much slamming of bedroom doors, and trampling overhead, and some knocking about of Master Bitherstone by Mrs. Pipchin, as a relief to the perturbation of her spirits, the black bombazeen garments of the worthy old lady darkened the audience-chamber where Mr. Dombey was contemplating the vacant arm-chair of his son and heir.

“Mrs. Pipchin,” said Mr. Dombey, “How do you do?”

“Thank you, sir,” said Mrs. Pipchin, “I am pretty well, considering.”

Mrs. Pipchin always used that form of words. It meant, considering her virtues, sacrifices, and so forth.

“I can’t expect, sir, to be very well,” said Mrs. Pipchin, taking a chair, and fetching her breath; “but such health as I have, I am grateful for.”

Mr. Dombey inclined his head with the satisfied air of a patron, who felt that this was the sort of thing for which he paid so much a quarter. After a moment’s silence he went on to say:

“Mrs. Pipchin, I have taken the liberty of calling, to

consult you in reference to my son. I have had it in my mind to do so for some time past; but have deferred it from time to time, in order that his health might be thoroughly re-established. You have no misgivings on that subject, Mrs. Pipchin?"

"Brighton has proved very beneficial, sir," returned Mrs. Pipchin. "Very beneficial, indeed."

"I purpose," said Mr. Dombey, "his remaining at Brighton."

Mrs. Pipchin rubbed her hands, and bent her gray eyes on the fire.

"But," pursued Mr. Dombey, stretching out his forefinger, "but possibly that he should now make a change, and lead a different kind of life here. In short, Mrs. Pipchin, that is the object of my visit. My son is getting on, Mrs. Pipchin. Really, he is getting on."

There was something melancholy in the triumphant air with which Mr. Dombey said this. It showed how long Paul's childish life had been to him, and how his hopes were set upon a later stage of his existence. Pity may appear a strange word to connect with any one so haughty and so cold, and yet he seemed a worthy subject for it at that moment.

"Six years old!" said Mr. Dombey, settling his neck-cloth—perhaps to hide an irrepressible smile that rather seemed to strike upon the surface of his face and glance away, as finding no resting place, than to play there for an instant. "Dear me, six will be changed to sixteen, before we have time to look about us."

"Ten years," croaked the unsympathetic Pipchin, with a frosty glistening of her hard gray eye, and a dreary shaking of her bent head, "is a long time."

"It depends on circumstances," returned Mr. Dombey: "at all events, Mrs. Pipchin, my son is six years old, and there is no doubt, I fear, that in his studies he is behind many children of his age—or his youth," said Mr. Dombey, quickly answering what he mistrusted was a shrewd twinkle of the frosty eye, "his youth is a more appropriate expression. Now, Mrs. Pipchin, instead of being behind his peers, my son ought to be before them; far before them. There is an eminence ready for him to mount upon. There is nothing of chance or doubt in the course before my son. His way in life was clear and prepared, and marked out, before he existed. The education of such a young gentleman must not be delayed. It must not be left imperfect. It must be very steadily and seriously undertaken, Mrs. Pipchin."

"Well, sir," said Mrs. Pipchin, "I can say nothing to the contrary."

"I was quite sure, Mrs. Pipchin," returned Mr. Dombey, approvingly, "that a person of your good sense could not, and would not."

“There is a great deal of nonsense—and worse—talked about young people not being pressed too hard at first, and being tempted on, and all the rest of it, sir,” said Mrs. Pipchin, impatiently rubbing her hooked nose. ‘It never was thought of in my time, and it has no business to be thought of now. My opinion is ‘keep ‘em at it.’”

“My good madam,” returned Mr. Dombey, “you have not acquired your reputation undeservedly; and I beg you to believe, Mrs. Pipchin, that I am more than satisfied with your excellent system of management, and shall have the greatest pleasure in commending it whenever my poor commendation”—Mr. Dombey’s loftiness when he affected to disparage his own importance, passed all bounds—“can be of any service. I have been thinking of Doctor Blimber’s, Mrs. Pipchin.”

“My neighbour, sir?” said Mrs. Pipchin, “I believe the doctor’s is an excellent establishment. I’ve heard that it’s very strictly conducted, and that there’s nothing but learning going on from morning to night.”

“And it’s very expensive,” added Mr. Dombey.

“And it’s very expensive, sir,” returned Mrs. Pipchin catching at the fact, as if in omitting that, she had omitted one of its leading merits.

“I have had some communication with the doctor, Mrs. Pipchin,” said Mr. Dombey, hitching his chair anxiously a little nearer to the fire, “and he does not consider Paul at all too young for his purpose. He mentioned several instances of boys in Greek at about the same age. If I have any little uneasiness in my own mind, Mrs. Pipchin, on the subject of this change, it is not on that head. My son not having known a mother has gradually concentrated much—too much—of his childish affection on his sister. Whether their separation—” Mr. Dombey said no more, but sat silent.

“Hoity-toity!” exclaimed Mrs. Pipchin, shaking out her black bombazeen skirts, and plucking up all the ogress within her. “If she don’t like it, Mr. Dombey, she must be taught to lump it.” The good lady apologised immediately afterwards for using so common a figure of speech, but said (and truly) that that was the way *she* reasoned with ‘em.

Mr. Dombey waited until Mrs. Pipchin had done bridling and shaking her head, and frowning down a legion of Bitherstones and Pankeys; and then said quietly, but correctively, “He, my good madam, he.”

Mrs. Pipchin’s system would have applied very much the same mode of cure to any uneasiness on the part of Paul, too; but as the hard gray eye was sharp enough to see that the recipe, however Mr. Dombey might admit its efficacy in the case of the daughter, was not a sov-

ereign remedy for the son, she argued the point ; and contended that change, and new society, and the different form of life he would lead at Doctor Blimber's, and the studies he would have to master, would very soon prove sufficient alienations. As this chimed in with Mr. Dombey's own hope and belief, it gave that gentleman a still higher opinion of Mrs. Pipchin's understanding ; and as Mrs. Pipchin, at the same time, bewailed the loss of her dear little friend (which was not an overwhelming shock to her, as she had long expected it, and had not looked, in the beginning, for his remaining with her longer than three months), he formed an equally good opinion of Mrs. Pipchin's disinterestedness. It was plain that he had given the subject anxious consideration, for he had formed a plan, which he announced to the ogress, of sending Paul to the doctor's as a weekly boarder for the first half year, during which time Florence would remain at the castle, that she might receive her brother there, on Saturdays. This would wean him by degrees, Mr. Dombey said : probably with a recollection of his not having been weaned by degrees on a former occasion.

Mr. Dombey finished the interview by expressing his hope that Mrs. Pipchin would still remain in office as general superintendent and overseer of her son, pending his studies at Brighton ; and having kissed Paul, and shaken hands with Florence, and beheld Master Bithersone in his collar of state, and made Miss Pankey cry by patting her on the head (in which region she was uncommonly tender, on account of a habit Mrs. Pipchin had of sounding it with her knuckles, like a cask), he withdrew to his hotel and dinner : resolved that Paul, now that he was getting so old and well, should begin a vigorous course of education forthwith, to qualify him for the position in which he was to shine ; and that Doctor Blimber should take him in hand immediately.

Whenever a young gentleman was taken in hand by Doctor Blimber, he might consider himself sure of a pretty tight squeeze. The doctor only undertook the charge of ten young gentlemen, but he had, always ready, a supply of learning for a hundred, on the lowest estimate ; and it was at once the business and delight of his life to gorge the unhappy ten with it.

In fact, Doctor Blimber's establishment was a great hot-house, in which there was a forcing apparatus incessantly at work. All the boys blew before their time. Mental green-peas were produced at Christmas, and intellectual asparagus all the year round. Mathematical gooseberries (very sour ones too) were common at untimely seasons, and from mere sprouts of bushes, under Doctor Blimber's cultivation. Every description of

Greek and Latin vegetable was got off the driest twigs of boys, under the frostiest circumstances. Nature was of no consequence at all. No matter what a young gentleman was intended to bear, Doctor Blimber made him bear to pattern, somehow or other.

This was all very pleasant and ingenious, but the system of forcing was attended with its usual disadvantages. There was not the right taste about the premature productions, and they didn't keep well. Moreover, one young gentleman, with a swollen nose and an excessively large head (the oldest of the ten who had "gone through" everything), suddenly left off blowing one day, and remained in the establishment a mere stalk. And people did say that the doctor had rather overdone it with young Toots, and that when he began to have whiskers he left off having brains.

There young Toots was, at any rate ; possessed of the gruffest of voices and the shrillest of minds ; sticking ornamental pins into his shirt, and keeping a ring in his waistcoat pocket to put on his little finger by stealth, when the pupils went out walking ; constantly falling in love by sight with nurserymaids, who had no idea of his existence ; and looking at the gas-lighted world over the little iron bars in the left-hand corner window of the front three pairs of stairs, after bed-time, like a greatly overgrown cherub who had sat up aloft much too long.

The doctor was a portly gentleman in a suit of black, with strings at his knees, and stockings below them. He had a bald head, highly polished ; a deep voice ; and a chin so very double, that it was a wonder how he managed to shave into the creases. He had likewise a pair of little eyes that were always half shut up, and a mouth that was always half expanded into a grin, as if he had, that moment, posed a boy, and were waiting to convict him from his own lips. Inasmuch, that when the doctor put his right hand into the breast of his coat, and with his other hand behind him, and a scarcely perceptible wag of his head, made the commonest observation to a nervous stranger, it was like a sentiment from the sphynx, and settled his business.

The doctor's was a mighty fine house, fronting the sea. Not a joyful style of house within, but quite the contrary. Sad-coloured curtains, whose proportions were spare and lean, hid themselves despondently behind the windows. The tables and chairs were put away in rows, like figures in a sum : fires were so rarely lighted in the rooms of ceremony, that they felt like wells, and a visitor represented the bucket ; the dining-room seemed the last place in the world where any eating or drinking was likely to occur ; there was no sound through all the house but the ticking of a great clock in

the hall, which made itself audible in the very garrets ; and sometimes a dull crying of young gentlemen at their lessons, like the murmurings of an assemblage of melancholy pigeons.

Miss Blimber, too, although a slim and graceful maid, did no soft violence to the gravity of the house. There was no light nonsense about Miss Blimber. She kept her hair short and crisp, and wore spectacles. She was dry and sandy with working in the graves of deceased languages. None of your live languages for Miss Blimber. They must be dead—stone dead—and then Miss Blimber dug them up like a Ghoul.

Mrs. Blimber, her mamma, was not learned herself, but she pretended to be, and that did quite as well. She said at evening parties, that if she could have known Cicero, she thought she could have died contented. It was the steady joy of her life to see the doctor's young gentlemen go out walking, unlike all other young gentlemen, in the largest possible shirt-collars and the stiffest possible cravats. It was so classical, she said.

As to Mr. Feeder, B.A., Doctor Blimber's assistant, he was a kind of human barrel-organ with a little list of tunes at which he was continually working, over and over again, without any variation. He might have been fitted up with a change of barrels, perhaps, in early life, if his destiny had been favourable ; but it had not been ; and he had only one, with which, in a monotonous round, it was his occupation to bewilder the young ideas of Doctor Blimber's young gentlemen. The young gentlemen were prematurely full of carking anxieties. They knew no rest from the pursuit of stony-hearted verbs, savage noun-substantives, inflexible syntactic passages, and ghosts of exercises that appeared to them in their dreams. Under the forcing system, a young gentleman usually took leave of his spirits in three weeks. He had all the cares of the world on his head in three months. He conceived bitter sentiments against his parents or guardians in four ; he was an old misanthrope, in five ; envied Curtius that blessed refuge in the earth, in six ; and at the end of the first twelvemonth had arrived at the conclusion, from which he never afterwards departed, that all the fancies of the poets, and lessons of the sages, were a mere collection of words and grammar, and had no other meaning in the world.

But he went on, blow, blow, blowing, in the doctor's hot-house, all the time ; and the doctor's glory and reputation were great, when he took his wintry growth home to his relations and friends.

Upon the doctor's door-steps one day, Paul stood with a fluttering heart, and with his small right hand in his father's. His other hand was locked in that of Florence.

How tight the tiny pressure of that one ; and how loose and cold the other !

Mrs. Pipchin hovered behind the victim, with her sable plumage and her hooked beak, like a bird of ill-omen. She was out of breath—for Mr. Dombey, full of great thoughts, had walked fast—and she croaked hoarsely as she waited for the opening of the door.

“Now, Paul,” said Mr. Dombey exultingly. “This is the way indeed to be Dombey and Son, and have money. You are almost a man already.”

“Almost,” returned the child.

Even his childish agitation could not master the sly and quaint yet touching look, with which he accompanied the reply.

It brought a vague expression of dissatisfaction into Mr. Dombey’s face ; but the door being opened, it was quickly gone.

“Doctor Blimber is at home, I believe ?” said Mr. Dombey.

The man said yes ; and as they passed in, looked at Paul as if he were a little mouse, and the house were a trap. He was a weak-eyed young man, with the first faint streaks or early dawn of a grin on his countenance. It was mere imbecility ; but Mrs. Pipchin took it into her head that it was impudence, and made a snap at him directly.

“How dare you laugh behind the gentleman’s back ?” said Mrs. Pipchin. “And what do you take me for ?”

“I ain’t a laughing at nobody, and I am sure I don’t take you for nothing, ma’am,” returned the young man, in consternation.

“A pack of idle dogs !” said Mrs. Pipchin, “only fit to be turnspits. Go and tell your master that Mr. Dombey’s here, or it’ll be worse for you !”

The weak-eyed young man went, very meekly, to discharge himself of this commission ; and soon came back to invite them to the doctor’s study.

“You’re laughing again, sir,” said Mrs. Pipchin, when it came to her turn, bringing up the rear, to pass him in the hall.

“I ain’t,” returned the young man, grievously oppressed. “I never see such a thing as this !”

“What is the matter, Mrs. Pipchin ?” said Mr. Dombey, looking round. “Softly ! Pray !”

Mrs. Pipchin, in her deference, merely muttered at the young man as he passed on, and said, “Oh, he was a precious fellow”—leaving the young man, who was all meekness and incapacity, affected even to tears by the incident. But Mrs. Pipchin had a way of falling foul of all meek people ; and her friends said who could wonder at it, after the Peruvian mines !

The doctor was sitting in his portentous study, with a globe at each knee, books all round him, Homer over the door, and Minerva on the mantel-shelf. "And how do you do, sir," he said to Mr. Dombey, "and how is my little friend?" Grave as an organ was the doctor's speech; and when he ceased, the great clock in the hall seemed (to Paul at least) to take him up, and to go on saying, "how, is, my, lit, tle, friend, how, is, my, lit, tle, friend," over and over and over again.

The little friend being something too small to be seen at all from where the doctor sat, over the books on his table, the doctor made several futile attempts to get a view of him round the legs; which Mr. Dombey perceiving, relieved the doctor from his embarrassment by taking Paul up in his arms, and sitting him on another little table, over against the doctor, in the middle of the room.

"Ha!" said the doctor, leaning back in his chair with his hand in his breast. "Now I see my little friend. How do you do, my little friend?"

The clock in the hall wouldn't subscribe to this alteration in the form of words, but continued to repeat "how, is, my, lit, tle, friend, how, is, my, lit, tle, friend!"

"Very well, I thank you, sir," returned Paul, answering the clock quite as much as the doctor.

"Ha!" said Dr. Blimber. "Shall we make a man of him?"

"Do you hear, Paul?" said Mr. Dombey; Paul being silent.

"Shall we make a man of him?" repeated the doctor.

"I had rather be a child," replied Paul.

"Indeed!" said the doctor. "Why?"

The child sat on the table looking at him, with a curious expression of suppressed emotion in his face, and beating one hand proudly on his knee as if he had the rising tears beneath it, and crushed them. But his other hand strayed a little way the while, a little farther—farther from him yet—until it lighted on the neck of Florence. "This is why," it seemed to say, and then the steady look was broken up and gone; the working lip was loosened; and the tears came streaming forth.

"Mrs. Pipchin," said his father, in a querulous manner, "I am really very sorry to see this."

"Come away from him, do, Miss Dombey," quoth the matron.

"Never mind," said the doctor, blandly nodding his head, to keep Mrs. Pipchin back. "Ne-ver mind; we shall substitute new cares and new impressions, Mr. Dombey, very shortly. You would still wish my little friend to acquire—"

“Everything, if you please, doctor,” returned Mr. Dombey firmly.

“Yes,” said the doctor, who, with his half-shut eyes, and his usual smile, seemed to survey Paul with the sort of interest that might attach to some choice little animal he was going to stuff. “Yes, exactly. Ha! We shall impart a great variety of information to our little friend, and bring him quickly forward, I dare say. I dare say. Quite a virgin soil, I believe you said, Mr. Dombey?”

“Except some ordinary preparation at home, and from this lady,” replied Mr. Dombey, introducing Mrs. Pipchin, who instantly communicated a rigidity to her whole muscular system, and snorted defiance beforehand, in case the doctor should disparage her; “except so far, Paul has, as yet, applied himself to no studies at all.”

Doctor Blimber inclined his head, in gentle tolerance of such insignificant poaching as Mrs. Pipchin’s, and said he was glad to hear it. It was much more satisfactory, he observed, rubbing his hands, to begin at the foundation. And again he leered at Paul, as if he would have liked to tackle him with the Greek alphabet on the spot.

“That circumstance, indeed, Doctor Blimber,” pursued Mr. Dombey, glancing at his little son, “and the interview I have already had the pleasure of holding with you, renders any further explanation, and consequently, any further intrusion on your valuable time, so unnecessary, that—”

“Now, Miss Dombey!” said the acid Pipchin.

“Permit me,” said the doctor, “one moment. Allow me to present Mrs. Blimber and my daughter, who will be associated with the domestic life of our young Pilgrim to Parnassus. Mrs. Blimber,” for the lady, who had perhaps been in waiting, opportunely entered, followed by her daughter, that fair sexton in spectacles, “Mr. Dombey. My daughter Cornelia, Mr. Dombey. Mr. Dombey, my love,” pursued the doctor, turning to his wife, “is so confiding as to—do you see our little friend?”

Mrs. Blimber, in an excess of politeness, of which Mr. Dombey was the object, apparently did not, for she was backing against the little friend, and very much endangering his position on the table. But, on this hint, she turned to admire his classical and intellectual lineaments, and turning again to Mr. Dombey, said, with a sigh, that she envied his dear son.

“Like a bee, sir,” said Mrs. Blimber, with uplifted eyes, “about to plunge into a garden of the choicest flowers, and sip the sweets for the first time. Virgil, Horace, Ovid, Terence, Plautus, Cicero. What a world of honey

have we here. It may appear remarkable, Mr. Dombey, in one who is a wife—the wife of such a husband—”

“Hush, hush,” said Doctor Blimber. “Fie for shame.”

“Mr. Dombey will forgive the partiality of a wife,” said Mrs. Blimber, with an engaging smile.

Mr. Dombey answered “Not at all:” applying those words, it is to be presumed, to the partiality, and not to the forgiveness.

“—And it may seem remarkable in one who is a mother also,” resumed Mrs. Blimber.

“And such a mother,” observed Mr. Dombey, bowing with some confused idea of being complimentary to Cornelia.

“But really,” pursued Mrs. Blimber, “I think if I could have known Cicero, and been his friend, and talked with him in his retirement at Tusculum (beau-ti-ful Tusculum!), I could have died contented.”

A learned enthusiam is so very contagious, that Mr. Dombey half believed this was exactly his case; and even Mrs. Pipchin, who was not, as we have seen, of any accommodating disposition, generally, gave utterance to a little sound between a groan and a sigh, as if she would have said that nobody but Cicero could have proved a lasting consolation under that failure of the Peruvian Mines, but that he indeed would have been a very Davy-lamp of refuge.

Cornelia looked at Mr. Dombey through her spectacles, as if she would have liked to crack a few quotations with him from the authority in question. But this design, if she entertained it, was frustrated by a knock at the room-door.

“Who is that?” said the doctor. “Oh! Come in, Toots; come in. Mr. Dombey, sir,” Toots bowed. “Quite a coincidence!” said Doctor Blimber. “Here we have the beginning and the end. Alpha and Omega. Our head boy, Mr. Dombey.”

The doctor might have called him their head and shoulders boy, for he was at least that much taller than any of the rest. He blushed very much at finding himself among strangers, and chuckled aloud.

“An addition to our little Portico, Toots,” said the doctor; “Mr. Dombey’s son.”

Young Toots blushed again; and finding, from a solemn silence which prevailed, that he was expected to say something, said to Paul, “How are you?” in a voice so deep, and a manner so sheepish, that if a lamb had roared it couldn’t have been more surprising.

“Ask Mr. Feeder, if you please, Toots,” said the doctor, “to prepare a few introductory volumes for Mr. Dombey’s son, and to allot him a convenient seat for study. My dear, I believe Mr. Dombey has not seen the dormitories.”

"If Mr. Dombey will walk up-stairs," said Mrs. Blimber, "I shall be more than proud to show him the dominions of the drowsy god."

With that, Mrs. Blimber, who was a lady of great suavity, and a wiry figure, and who wore a cap composed of sky-blue materials, proceeded up-stairs with Mr. Dombey and Cornelia; Mrs. Pipchin following, and looking out sharp for her enemy the footman.

While they were gone, Paul sat upon the table holding Florence by the hand, and glancing timidly from the doctor round and round the room, while the doctor, leaning back in his chair, with his hand in his breast as usual, held a book from him at arm's length, and read. There was something very awful in this manner of reading. It was such a determined, unimpassioned, inflexible, cold-blooded way of going to work. It left the doctor's countenance exposed to view; and when the doctor smiled auspiciously at his author, or knit his brows, or shook his head or made wry faces at him as much as to say, "Don't tell me, sir. I know better," it was terrific.

Toots, too, had no business to be outside the door, ostentatiously examining the wheels in his watch, and counting his half-crowns. But that didn't last long; for Dr. Blimber, happening to change the position of his tight plump legs, as if he were going to get up, Toots swiftly vanished, and appeared no more.

Mr. Dombey and his conductress were soon heard coming down-stairs again, talking all the way; and presently they entered the doctor's study.

"I hope, Mr. Dombey," said the doctor, laying down his book, "that the arrangements meet your approval."

"They are excellent, sir," said Mr. Dombey.

"Very fair, indeed," said Mrs. Pipchin, in a low voice; never disposed to give too much encouragement.

"Mrs. Pipchin," said Mr. Dombey, wheeling round, "will, with your permission, Doctor and Mrs. Blimber, visit Paul now and then."

"Whenever Mrs. Pipchin pleases," observed the doctor.

"Always happy to see her," said Mrs. Blimber.

"I think," said Mr. Dombey, "I have given all the trouble I need, and may take my leave. Paul, my child," he went close to him, as he sat upon the table. "Good bye."

"Good bye, papa."

The limp and careless little hand that Mr. Dombey took in his, was singularly out of keeping with the wistful face. But he had no part in its sorrowful ex-

pression. It was not addressed to him. No, no. To Florence—all to Florence.

If Mr. Dombey in his insolence of wealth, had ever made an enemy, hard to appease and cruelly vindictive in his hate, even such an enemy might have received the pang that wrung his proud heart then, as compensation for his injury.

He bent down over his boy, and kissed him. If his sight were dimmed as he did so, by something that for a moment blurred the little face, and made it indistinct to him, his mental vision may have been, for that short time, the clearer perhaps.

“I shall see you soon, Paul. You are free on Saturdays and Sundays, you know.”

“Yes, papa,” returned Paul: looking at his sister. “On Saturdays and Sundays.”

“And you’ll try and learn a great deal here, and be a clever man,” said Mr. Dombey; “won’t you?”

“I’ll try,” returned the child wearily.

“And you’ll be soon grown up now!” said Mr. Dombey.

“Oh! very soon!” replied the child. Once more the old, old look, passed rapidly across his features like a strange light. It fell on Mrs. Pipchin, and extinguished itself in her black dress. That excellent ogress stepped forward to take leave and bear off Florence, which she had long been thirsting to do. The move on her part roused Mr. Dombey, whose eyes were fixed on Paul. After patting him on the head, and pressing his small hand again, he took leave of Doctor Blimber, Mrs. Blimber, and Miss Blimber, with his usual polite frigidity, and walked out of the study.

Despite his entreaty that they would not think of stirring, Doctor Blimber, Mrs. Blimber, and Miss Blimber all pressed forward to attend him to the hall; and thus Mrs. Pipchin got into a state of entanglement with Miss Blimber and the doctor, and was crowded out of the study before she could clutch Florence. To which happy accident Paul stood afterwards indebted for the dear remembrance, that Florence ran back to throw her arms round his neck, and that hers was the last face in the doorway: turned towards him with a smile of encouragement, the brighter for the tears through which it beamed.

It made his childish bosom heave and swell when it was gone; and sent the globes, the books, blind Homer and Minerva, swimming round the room. But they stopped, all of a sudden; and then he heard the loud clock in the hall still gravely inquiring ‘how, is, my, lit, tle, friend, how, is, my, lit, tle, friend,’ as it had done before.

He sat, with folded hands, upon his pedestal, silently

listening. But he might have answered 'weary, weary ! very lonely, very sad !' And there, with an aching void in his young heart, and all outside so cold, and bare, and strange, Paul sat as if he had taken life unfurnished, and the upholsterer were never coming.

CHAPTER XII.

Paul's Education.

AFTER the lapse of some minutes, which appeared an immense time to little Paul Dombey on the table, Doctor Blimber came back. The doctor's walk was stately, and calculated to impress the juvenile mind with solemn feelings. It was a sort of march ; but when the doctor put out his right foot, he gravely turned upon his axis, with a semi-circular sweep towards the left ; and when he put out his left foot, he turned in the same manner towards the right. So that he seemed, at every stride he took, to look about him as though he was saying, "Can anybody have the goodness to indicate any subject, in any direction, on which I am uninformed ! I rather think not."

Mrs. Blimber and Miss Blimber came back in the doctor's company ; and the doctor, lifting his new pupil off the table, delivered him over to Miss Blimber.

"Cornelia," said the doctor, "Dombey will be your charge at first. Bring him on, Cornelia, bring him on."

Miss Blimber received her young ward from the Doctor's hands ; and Paul, feeling that the spectacles were surveying him, cast down his eyes.

"How old are you, Dombey ?" said Miss Blimber.

"Six," answered Paul, wondering, as he stole a glance at the young lady, why her hair didn't grow long like Florence's, and why she was like a boy.

"How much do you know of your Latin Grammar, Dombey ?" said Miss Blimber.

"None of it," answered Paul. Feeling that the answer was a shock to Miss Blimber's sensibility, he looked up at the three faces that were looking down at him, and said :

"I haven't been well. I have been a weak child. I couldn't learn a Latin Grammar when I was out, every day, with old Glubb. I wish you'd tell old Glubb to come and see me, if you please."

"What a dreadfully low name !" said Mrs. Blimber. "Unclassical to a degree ! Who is the monster, child ?"

"What monster ?" inquired Paul.

"Glubb," said Mrs. Blimber, with a great disrelish.

"He's no more a monster than you are," returned Paul.

"What!" cried the doctor, in a terrible voice. "Aye, aye, aye! Aha! What's that?"

Paul was dreadfully frightened; but still he made a stand for the absent Glubb, though he did it trembling.

"He's a very nice old man, ma'am," he said. "He used to draw my couch. He knows all about the deep sea, and the fish that are in it, and the great monsters that come and lie on rocks in the sun, and dive into the water again when they're startled, blowing and splashing so, that they can be heard for miles. There are some creatures," said Paul, warming with his subject, "I don't know how many yards long, and I forget their names, but Florence knows, that pretend to be in distress; and when a man goes near them, out of compassion, they open their great jaws, and attack him. But all he has got to do," said Paul, boldly tendering this information to the very doctor himself, "is to keep on turning as he runs away, and then, as they turn slowly, because they are so long, and can't bend, he's sure to beat them. And though old Glubb don't know why the sea should make me think of my mama that's dead, or what it is that it is always saying—always saying! he knows a great deal about it. And I wish," the child concluded, with a sudden falling of his countenance, and failing in his animation, as he looked like one forlorn, upon the three strange faces, "that you'd let old Glubb come here to see me, for I know him very well, and he knows me."

"Ha!" said the doctor, shaking his head; "this is bad but study will do much."

Mrs. Blimber opined, with something like a shiver, that he was an unaccountable child; and allowing for the difference of visage, looked at him pretty much as Mrs. Pipchin had been used to do.

"Take him round the house, Cornelia," said the doctor, "and familiarise him with his new sphere. Go with that young lady, Dombey."

Dombey obeyed; giving his hand to the abstruse Cornelia, and looking at her sideways, with timid curiosity, as they went away together. For her spectacles, by reason of the glistening of the glasses, made her so mysterious, that he didn't know where she was looking, and was not indeed quite sure that she had any eyes at all behind them.

Cornelia took him first to the school-room, which was situated at the back of the hall, and was approached through two baize doors, which deadened and muffled the young gentlemen's voices. Here, there were eight young gentlemen in various stages of mental prostration, all very hard at work, and very grave indeed, Toots, as an old hand, had a desk to himself in one corner: and

a magnificent man, of immense age, he looked, in Paul's young eyes, behind it.

Mr. Feeder, B. A., who sat at another little desk, had his Virgil stop on, and was slowly grinding that tune to four young gentlemen. Of the remaining four, two, who grasped their foreheads convulsively, were engaged in solving mathematical problems: one with his face like a dirty window, from much crying, was endeavouring to flounder through a hopeless number of lines before dinner; and one sat looking at his task in stony stupefaction and despair—which it seemed had been his condition ever since breakfast time.

The appearance of a new boy did not create the sensation that might have been expected. Mr. Feeder, B. A. (who was in the habit of shaving his head for coolness, and had nothing but little bristles on it), gave him a bony hand, and told him he was glad to see him—which Paul would have been very glad to have told *him*, if he could have done so with the least sincerity. Then Paul, instructed by Cornelia, shook hands with the four young gentlemen at Mr. Feeder's desk; then with the two young gentlemen at work on the problems, who were very feverish; then with the young gentleman at work against time, who was very inky; and lastly with the young gentleman in a state of stupefaction, who was flabby and quite cold.

Paul having been already introduced to Toots, that pupil merely chuckled and breathed hard, as his custom was, and pursued the occupation in which he was engaged. It was not a severe one; for on account of his having "gone through" so much (in more senses than one), and also of his having, as before hinted, left off blowing in his prime, Toots now had licence to pursue his own course of study; which was chiefly to write long letters to himself from persons of distinction, addressed 'P. Toots, Esquire, Brighton, Sussex,' and to preserve them in his desk with great care.

These ceremonies passed, Cornelia led Paul up-stairs to the top of the house; which was rather a slow journey, on account of Paul being obliged to land both feet on every stair, before he mounted another. But they reached their journey's end at last; and there, in a front room, looking over the wild sea, Cornelia showed him a nice little bed with white hangings, close to the window, on which there was already beautifully written on a card in round text—down strokes very thick, and up strokes very fine—DOMBEY; while two other little bedsteads in the same room were announced, through like means, as respectively appertaining unto BRIGGS and TOZER.

Just as they got down-stairs again into the hall, Paul saw the weak-eyed young man who had given that mor-

tal offence to Mrs. Pipchin, suddenly seize a very large drumstick, and fly at a gong that was hanging up, as if he had gone mad, or wanted vengeance. Instead of receiving warning, however, or being instantly taken into custody, the young man left off unchecked, after having made a dreadful noise. Then Cornelia Blimber said to Dombey that dinner would be ready in a quarter of an hour, and perhaps he had better go into the schoolroom among his "friends."

So Dombey, deferentially passing the great clock which was still as anxious as ever to know how he found himself, opened the schoolroom door a very little way, and strayed in like a lost boy : shutting it after him with some difficulty. His friends were all dispersed about the room except the stony friend, who remained immoveable. Mr. Feeder was stretching himself in his gray gown, as if, regardless of expense, he were resolved to pull the sleeves off.

"Heigh ho hum!" cried Mr. Feeder, shaking himself like a cart-horse, "Oh dear me, dear me! Ya-a-a-ah!"

Paul was quite alarmed by Mr. Feeder's yawning; it was done on such a great scale, and he was so terribly in earnest. All the boys too (Toots excepted) seemed knocked up, and were getting ready for dinner—some newly tying their neck-cloths, which were very stiff indeed; and others washing their hands or brushing their hair, in an adjoining ante-chamber—as if they didn't think they should enjoy it at all.

Young Toots who was ready beforehand, and had therefore nothing to do, and had leisure to bestow upon Paul, said, with heavy good nature :

"Sit down, Dombey."

"Thank you, sir," said Paul.

His endeavouring to hoist himself on to a very high window-seat, and his slipping down again, appeared to prepare Toots's mind for the reception of a discovery.

"You're a very small chap," said Mr. Toots.

"Yes, sir, I'm small," returned Paul. "Thank you, sir."

For Toots had lifted him into the seat, and done it kindly too.

"Who's your tailor?" inquired Toots, after looking at him for some moments.

"It's a woman that has made my clothes as yet," said Paul. "My sister's dressmaker."

"My tailor's Burgess and Co.," said Toots. "Fash'nable. But very dear."

Paul had wit enough to shake his head, as if he would have said it was easy to see *that* : and indeed he thought so.

“Your father’s regularly rich, ain’t he?” inquired Mr. Toots.

“Yes, sir,” said Paul. “He’s Dombey and Son.”

“And which?” demanded Toots.

“And Son, sir,” replied Paul.

Mr. Toots made one or two attempts, in a low voice, to fix the firm in his mind; but not quite succeeding, said he would get Paul to mention the name again to-morrow morning, as it was rather important. And indeed he purposed nothing less than writing himself a private and confidential letter from Dombey and Son immediately.

By this time the other pupils (always excepting the stony boy) gathered round. They were polite, but pale: and spoke low; and they were so depressed in their spirits, that in comparison with the general tone of that company, Master Bitherstone was a perfect Miller, or complete Jest Book. And yet he had a sense of injury upon him too, had Bitherstone.

“You sleep in my room, don’t you?” asked a solemn young gentleman, whose shirt-collar curled up the lobes of his ears.

“Master Briggs?” inquired Paul.

“Tozer,” said the young gentleman.

Paul answered yes; and Tozer pointing out the stony pupil, said that was Briggs. Paul had already felt certain that it must be either Briggs or Tozer, though he didn’t know why.

“Is yours a strong constitution?” inquired Tozer.

Paul said he thought not. Tozer replied that *he* thought not also, judging from Paul’s looks, and that it was a pity, for it need be. He then asked Paul if he were going to begin with Cornelia; and on Paul saying “yes,” all the young gentlemen (Briggs excepted) gave a low groan.

It was drowned in the tintinnabulation of the gong, which sounding again with great fury, there was a general move towards the dining-room; still excepting Briggs the stony boy, who remained where he was, and as he was; and on its way to whom Paul presently encountered a round of bread genteelly served on a plate and napkin, and with a silver fork lying crosswise on the top of it. Doctor Blimber was already in his place in the dining-room, at the top of the table, with Miss Blimber and Mrs. Blimber on either side of him. Mr. Feeder in a black coat was at the bottom. Paul’s chair was next to Miss Blimber; but it being found, when he sat in it, that his eyebrows were not much above the level of the table-cloth, some books were brought in from the doctor’s study, on which he was elevated, and on which he always sat from that time—carrying them in and out

himself on after occasions, like a little elephant and castle.

Grace having been said by the doctor, dinner began. There was some nice soup; also roast meat, boiled meat, vegetables, pie, and cheese. Every young gentleman had a massive silver fork, and a napkin; and all the arrangements were stately and handsome. In particular, there was a butler in a blue coat and bright buttons, who gave quite a winey flavour to the table beer; he poured it out so superbly.

Nobody spoke, unless spoken to, except Doctor Blimber, Mrs. Blimber, and Miss Blimber, who conversed occasionally. Whenever a young gentleman was not actually engaged with his knife and fork or spoon, his eye, with an irresistible attraction, sought the eye of Doctor Blimber, Mrs. Blimber or Miss Blimber, and modestly rested there. Toots appeared to be the only exception to this rule. He sat next Mr. Feeder on Paul's side of the table, and frequently looked behind and before the intervening boys to catch a glimpse of Paul.

Only once during dinner was there any conversation that included the young gentlemen. It happened at the epoch of the cheese, when the doctor having taken a glass of port wine, and hemmed twice or thrice, said:

"It is remarkable, Mr. Feeder, that the Romans—"

At the mention of this terrible people, their implacable enemies, every young gentleman fastened his gaze upon the doctor, with an assumption of the deepest interest. One of the number who happened to be drinking, and who caught the doctor's eye glaring at him through the side of his tumbler, left off so hastily that he was convulsed for some moments, and in the sequel ruined Doctor Blimber's point.

"It is remarkable, Mr. Feeder," said the doctor, beginning again slowly, "that the Romans, in those gorgeous and profuse entertainments of which we read in the days of the Emperors, when luxury had attained a height unknown before or since, and when whole provinces were ravaged to supply the splendid means of one imperial banquet—"

Here the offender, who had been swelling and straining, and waiting in vain for a full stop, broke out violently.

"Johnson," said Mr. Feeder, in a low reproachful voice, "take some water."

The doctor, looking very stern, made a pause until the water was brought, and then resumed:

"And when, Mr. Feeder—"

But Mr. Feeder, who saw that Johnson must break out again, and who knew that the doctor would never come to a period before the young gentlemen until he had finished all he meant to say, couldn't keep his eye

off Johnson; and thus was caught in the fact of not looking at the doctor, who consequently stopped.

"I beg your pardon sir," said Mr. Feeder, reddening. "I beg your pardon, Doctor Blimber."

"And when," said the doctor, raising his voice, "when, sir, as we read, and have no reason to doubt— incredible as it may appear to the vulgar of our time—the brother of Vitellius prepared for him a feast, in which were served of fish, two thousand dishes—"

"Take some water, Johnson—dishes, sir," said Mr. Feeder.

"Of various sorts of fowl, five thousand dishes."

"Or try a crust of bread," said Mr. Feeder.

"And one dish," pursued Doctor Blimber, raising his voice still higher as he looked all round the table, "called, from its enormous dimensions, the Shield of Minerva, and made, among other costly ingredients, of the brains of pheasants—"

"Ow, ow, ow!" (from Johnson.)

"Woodcocks."

"Ow, ow, ow!"

"The sounds of the fish called scari,"

"You'll burst some vessel in your head," said Mr. Feeder. "You had better let it come."

"And the spawn of the lamprey, brought from the Carpathian Sea," pursued the doctor in his severest voice; "when we read of costly entertainments such as these, and still remember, that we have a Titus,"

"What would be your mother's feelings if you died of apoplexy!" said Mr. Feeder.

"A Domitian,"

"And you're blue, you know," said Mr. Feeder.

"A Nero, a Tiberius, a Caligula, a Heliogabalus, and many more," pursued the doctor; "it is, Mr. Feeder—if you are doing me the honour to attend—remarkable: VERY remarkable, sir—"

But Johnson, unable to suppress it any longer, burst at that moment into such an overwhelming fit of coughing, that, although both his immediate neighbours thumped him on the back, and Mr. Feeder himself held a glass of water to his lips, and the butler walked him up and down several times between his own chair and the sideboard, like a sentry, it was full five minutes before he was moderately composed, and then there was a profound silence.

"Gentlemen," said Doctor Blimber, "rise for Grace! Cornelia, lift Dombey down"—nothing of whom but his scalp was accordingly seen above the table-cloth. "Johnson will repeat to me to-morrow morning before breakfast, without book, and from the Greek Testament, the first chapter of the Epistle of Saint Paul to the

Ephesians. We will resume our studies, Mr. Feeder, in half-an-hour."

The young gentlemen bowed and withdrew. Mr. Feeder did likewise. During the half-hour, the young gentlemen, broken into pairs, loitered arm-in-arm up and down a small piece of ground behind the house, or endeavoured to kindle a spark of animation in the breast of Briggs. But nothing happened so vulgar as play. Punctually at the appointed time, the gong was sounded, and the studies, under the joint auspices of Doctor Blimber and Mr. Feeder, were resumed.

As the Olympic game of lounging up and down had been cut shorter than usual that day, on Johnson's account, they all went out for a walk before tea. Even Briggs (though he hadn't begun yet) partook of this dissipation; in the enjoyment of which he looked over the cliff two or three times darkly. Doctor Blimber accompanied them; and Paul had the honour of being taken in tow by the doctor himself: a distinguished state of things, in which he looked very little and feeble.

Tea was served in a style no less polite than the dinner; and after tea, the young gentlemen rising and bowing as before, withdrew to fetch up the unfinished tasks of that day, or to get up the already looming tasks of to-morrow. In the meantime, Mr. Feeder withdrew to his own room; and Paul sat in a corner wondering whether Florence was thinking of him, and what they were all about at Mrs. Pipchin's.

Mr. Toots, who had been detained by an important letter from the Duke of Wellington, found Paul out after a time; and having looked for him a long while, as before, inquired if he was fond of waistcoats.

Paul said "Yes, sir."

"So am I," said Toots.

No word more spake Toots that night; but he stood looking at Paul as if he liked him; and as there was company in that, and Paul was not inclined to talk, it answered his purpose better than conversation.

At eight o'clock or so, the gong sounded again for prayers in the dining-room, where the butler afterwards presided over a side table, on which bread and cheese and beer were spread for such young gentlemen as desired to partake of those refreshments. The ceremonies concluded by the doctor's saying, "Gentlemen, we will resume our studies at seven to-morrow;" and then, for the first time, Paul saw Cornelia Blimber's eye, and saw that it was upon him. When the doctor had said these words, "Gentlemen, we will resume our studies at seven to-morrow," the pupils bowed again, and went to bed.

In the confidence of their own room up-stairs, Briggs said his head ached ready to split, and that he should wish himself dead if it wasn't for his mother, and a blackbird he had at home. Tozer didn't say much, but he sighed a good deal, and told Paul to look out, for his turn would come to-morrow. After uttering those prophetic words, he undressed himself moodily, and got into bed. Briggs was in his bed too, and Paul in his bed too, before the weak-eyed young man appeared to take away the candle, when he wished them good night and pleasant dreams. But his benevolent wishes were in vain, as far as Briggs and Tozer were concerned; for Paul, who lay awake for a long while, and often woke afterwards, found that Briggs was ridden by his lesson as a nightmare; and that Tozer, whose mind was affected in his sleep by similar causes, in a minor degree, talked unknown tongues, or scraps of Greek and Latin—it was all one to Paul—which, in the silence of the night, had an inexpressibly wicked and guilty effect.

Paul had sunk into a sweet sleep, and dreamed that he was walking hand in hand with Florence through beautiful gardens, when they came to a large sunflower which suddenly expanded itself into a gong, and began to sound. Opening his eyes, he found that it was a dark, windy morning, with a drizzling rain; and that the real gong was giving dreadful note of preparation, down in the hall.

So he got up directly, and found Briggs with hardly any eyes, for nightmare and grief had made his face puffy, putting his boots on: while Tozer stood shivering and rubbing his shoulders in a very bad humour. Poor Paul couldn't dress himself easily, not being used to it, and asked them if they would have the goodness to tie some strings for him; but as Briggs merely said "Bother!" and Tozer, "Oh yes!" he went down when he was otherwise ready, to the next story, where he saw a pretty young woman in leather gloves, cleaning a stove. The young woman seemed surprised at his appearance, and asked him where his mother was. When Paul told her she was dead, she took her gloves off, and did what he wanted; and furthermore rubbed his hands to warm them; and gave him a kiss; and told him whenever he wanted anything of that sort—meaning in the dressing way—to ask for 'Melia; which Paul, thanking her very much, said he certainly would. He then proceeded softly on his journey down-stairs, towards the room in which the young gentlemen resumed their studies, when, passing by a door that stood ajar, a voice from within cried "Is that Dombey?" On Paul replying, "Yes, ma'am:" for he knew the voice to be Miss Blimber's:

Miss Blimber said "Come in, Dombey." And in he went.

Miss Blimber presented exactly the appearance she had presented yesterday, except that she wore a shawl. Her little light curls were as crisp as ever, and she had already her spectacles on, which made Paul wonder whether she went to bed in them. She had a cool little sitting-room of her own up there, with some books in it, and no fire. But Miss Blimber was never cold, and never sleepy.

"Now, Dombey," said Miss Blimber, "I'm going out for a constitutional."

Paul wondered what that was, and why she didn't send the footman out to get it in such unfavourable weather. But he made no observation on the subject: his attention being devoted to a little pile of new books, on which Miss Blimber appeared to have been recently engaged.

"These are yours, Dombey," said Miss Blimber.

"All of 'em, ma'am?" said Paul.

"Yes," returned Miss Blimber; "and Mr. Feeder will look you out some more very soon if you are as studious as I expect you will be, Dombey."

"Thank you, ma'am," said Paul.

"I am going out for a constitutional," resumed Miss Blimber; "and while I am gone, that is to say in the interval between this and breakfast, Dombey, I wish you to read over what I have marked in these books, and to tell me if you quite understand what you have got to learn. Don't lose time, Dombey, for you have none to spare, but take them down-stairs, and begin directly."

"Yes, ma'am," answered Paul.

There were so many of them, that although Paul put one hand under the bottom book and his other hand and his chin on the top book, and hugged them all closely, the middle book slipped out before he reached the door, and then they all tumbled down on the floor. Miss Blimber said, "Oh Dombey, Dombey, this is really very careless!" and piled them up afresh for him; and this time, by dint of balancing them with great nicety, Paul got out of the room, and down a few stairs before two of them escaped again. But he held the rest so tight, that he only left one more on the first floor, and one in the passage; and when he had got the main body down into the school-room, he set off up-stairs again to collect the stragglers. Having at last amassed the whole library, and climbed into his place, he fell to work, encouraged by a remark from Tozer to the effect that he "was in for it now;" which was the only interruption he received till breakfast time. At that meal, for which he

had no appetite, everything was quite as solemn and genteel as at the others ; and when it was finished, he followed Miss Blimber up-stairs.

“ Now, Dombey,” said Miss Blimber. “ How have you got on with those books ? ”

They comprised a little English, and a deal of Latin—names of things, declensions of articles and substantives, exercises thereon, and preliminary rules—a trifle of orthography, a glance at ancient history, a wink or two at modern ditto, a few tables, two or three weights and measures, and a little general information. When poor Paul had spelt out number two, he found he had no idea of number one ; fragments whereof afterwards obtruded themselves into number three, which slid into number four, which grafted itself on to number two. So that whether twenty Romuluses made a Remus, or *hic hæc hoc* was Troy weight, or a verb always agreed with an ancient Briton, or three times four was Taurus a bull, were open questions with him.

“ Oh, Dombey, Dombey ! ” said Miss Blimber, “ this is very shocking. ”

“ If you please,” said Paul, “ I think if I might sometimes talk a little to old Glubb, I should be able to do better. ”

“ Nonsense, Dombey,” said Miss Blimber. “ I couldn’t hear of it. This is not the place for Glubbs of any kind. You must take the books down, I suppose, Dombey, one by one, and perfect yourself in the day’s instalment of subject A, before you turn at all to subject B. And now take away the top book, if you please, Dombey, and return when you are master of the theme. ”

Miss Blimber expressed her opinions on the subject of Paul’s uninstructed state with a gloomy delight, as if she had expected this result, and were glad to find that they must be in constant communication. Paul withdrew with the top task, as he was told, and laboured away at it, down below : sometimes remembering every word of it, sometimes forgetting it all, and everything else besides : until at last he ventured up-stairs again to repeat the lesson, when it was nearly all driven out of his head before he began, by Miss Blimber’s shutting up the book, and saying, “ Go on, Dombey ! ” a proceeding so suggestive of the knowledge inside of her, that Paul looked upon the young lady with consternation, as a kind of learned Guy Faux, or artificial Bogle, stuffed full of scholastic straw.

He acquitted himself very well, nevertheless ; and Miss Blimber, commending him as giving promise of getting on fast, immediately provided him with subject B ; from which he passed to C, and even to D before dinner. It was hard work, resuming his studies, soon after din-

ner ; and he felt giddy and confused, and drowsy and dull. But all the other young gentlemen had similar sensations, and were obliged to resume their studies too, if there were any comfort in that. It was a wonder that the great clock in the hall, instead of being constant to its first inquiry, never said, "Gentlemen, we will now resume our studies," for that phrase was often enough repeated in its neighbourhood. The studies went round like a mighty wheel, and the young gentlemen were always stretched upon it.

After tea there were exercises again, and preparations for next day by candle-light. And in due course there was bed ; where, but for that resumption of the studies which took place in dreams, were rest and sweet forgetfulness.

Oh Saturdays ! Oh happy Saturdays ! when Florence always came at noon, and never would, in any weather, stay away, though Mrs. Pipchin snarled and growled, and worried her bitterly. Those Saturdays were Sabbaths for at least two little Christians among all the Jews, and did the holy Sabbath work of strengthening and knitting up a brother's and a sister's love.

Not even Sunday nights—the heavy Sunday nights, whose shadow darkened the first waking burst of light on Sunday mornings—could mar those precious Saturdays. Whether it was the great sea-shore, where they sat, and strolled together ; or whether it was only Mrs. Pipchin's dull back room, in which she sang to him so softly, with his drowsy head upon her arm ; Paul never cared. It was Florence. That was all he thought of. So, on Sunday nights, when the Doctor's dark door stood agape to swallow him up for another week, the time was come for taking leave of Florence ; no one else.

Mrs. Wickam had been drafted home to the house in town, and Miss Nipper, now a smart young woman, had come down. To many a single combat with Mrs. Pipchin, did Miss Nipper gallantly devote herself ; and if ever Mrs. Pipchin in all her life had found her match, she had found it now. Miss Nipper threw away the scabbard the first morning she arose in Mrs. Pipchin's house. She asked and gave no quarter. She said it must be war, and war it was ; and Mrs. Pipchin lived from that time in the midst of surprises, harassings, and defiances ; and skirmishing attacks that came bouncing in upon her from the passage, even in unguarded moments of chops, and carried desolation to her very toast.

Miss Nipper had returned one Sunday night with Florence, from walking back with Paul to the Doctor's, when Florence took from her bosom a little piece of paper, on which she had penciled down some words.

"See here, Susan," she said. "These are the names of the little books that Paul brings home to do those long exercises with, when he is so tired. I copied them last night while he was writing."

"Don't show 'em to me Miss Floy, if you please," returned Nipper, "I'd as soon see Mrs. Pipchin."

"I want you to buy them for me, Susan, if you will, to-morrow morning. I have money enough," said Florence.

"Why, goodness gracious me, Miss Floy," returned Nipper, "how can you talk like that, when you have books upon books already, and masterses and missesses a teaching of you everything continual, though my belief is that your pa, Miss Dombey, never would have learnt you nothing, never would have thought of it, unless you'd asked him—when he couldn't well refuse; but giving consent when asked, and offering when unasked, miss, is quite two things; I may not have my objections to a young man's keeping company with me, and when he puts the question, may say 'yes,' but that's not saying 'would you be so kind as like me.'"

"But you can buy me the books, Susan; and you will, when you know I want them."

"Well, miss, and why do you want 'em?" replied Nipper; adding, in a lower voice, "if it was to fling at Mrs. Pipchin's head, I'd buy a cart-load."

"I think I could perhaps give Paul some help, Susan, if I had these books," said Florence, "and make the coming week a little easier to him. At least I want to try. So buy them for me, dear, and I will never forget how kind it was of you to do it!"

It must have been a harder heart than Susan Nipper's that could have rejected the little purse Florence held out with these words, or the gentle look of entreaty with which she seconded her petition. Susan put the purse in her pocket without reply, and trotted out at once upon her errand.

The books were not easy to procure; and the answer at several shops was, either that they were just out of them, or that they never kept them, or that they had had a great many last month, or that they expected a great many next week. But Susan was not easily baffled in such an enterprise; and having entrapped a white-haired youth, in a black calico apron, from a library where she was known, to accompany her in her quest, she led him such a life in going up and down, that he exerted himself to the utmost, if it were only to get rid of her; and finally enabled her to return home in triumph.

With these treasures then, after her own daily lessons were over, Florence sat down at night to track Paul's

footsteps through the thorny ways of learning ; and being possessed of a naturally quick and sound capacity, and taught by that most wonderful of masters, love, it was not long before she gained upon Paul's heels, and caught and passed him.

Not a word of this was breathed to Mrs. Pipchin : but many a night when they were all in bed, and when Miss Nipper, with her hair in papers and herself asleep in some uncomfortable attitude, reposed unconscious by her side ; and when the chinking ashes in the grate were cold and grey ; and when the candles were burnt down and guttering out ;—Florence tried so hard to be a substitute for one small Dombey, that her fortitude and perseverance might have almost won her a free right to bear the name herself.

And high was her reward, when one Saturday evening, as little Paul was sitting down as usual to "resume his studies," she sat down by his side, and showed him all that was so rough, made smooth, and all that was so dark, made clear and plain, before him. It was nothing but a startled look in Paul's wan face—a flush—a smile—and then a close embrace—but God knows how her heart leaped up at this rich payment for her trouble.

"Oh, Floy !" cried her brother, "how I love you ! How I love you, Floy !"

"And I you, dear !"

"Oh ! I am sure of that, Floy."

He said no more about it, but all that evening sat close by her, very quiet ; and in the night he called out from his little room within hers, three or four times, that he loved her.

Regularly, after that, Florence was prepared to sit down with Paul on Saturday night, and patiently assist him through so much as they could anticipate together, of his next week's work. The cheering thought that he was labouring on where Florence had just toiled before him, would, of itself, have been a stimulant to Paul in the perpetual resumption of his studies ; but coupled with the actual lightening of his load, consequent on this assistance, it saved him, possibly from sinking underneath the burden which the fair Cornelia Blimber piled upon his back.

It was not that Miss Blimber meant to be too hard upon him, or that Doctor Blimber meant to bear too heavily on the young gentlemen in general. Cornelia merely held the faith in which she had been bred ; and the doctor, in some partial confusion of his ideas, regarded the young gentlemen as if they were all doctors, and were born grown up. Comforted by the applause of the young gentlemen's relations, and urged on by their blind vanity and ill-considered haste, it would

have been strange if Doctor Blimber had discovered his mistake, or trimmed his swelling sails to any other tack.

Thus in the case of Paul. When Doctor Blimber said he made great progress, and was naturally clever, Mr. Dombey was more bent than ever on his being forced and crammed. In the case of Briggs, when Dr. Blimber reported that he did not make great progress yet, and was not naturally clever, Briggs senior was inexorable in the same purpose. In short, however high and false the temperature at which the doctor kept his hothouse, the owners of the plants were always ready to lend a helping hand at the bellows, and to stir the fire.

Such spirits as he had in the outset, Paul soon lost of course. But he retained all that was strange, and old, and thoughtful in his character; and under circumstances so favourable to the development of these tendencies, became even more strange, and old, and thoughtful, than before.

The only difference was, that he kept his character to himself. He grew more thoughtful and reserved, every day; and had no such curiosity in any living member of the doctor's household, as he had had in Mrs. Pipchin. He loved to be alone; and in those short intervals when he was not occupied with his books, liked nothing so well as wandering about the house by himself, or sitting on the stairs, listening to the great clock in the hall. He was intimate with all the paper-hangings in the house; saw things that no one else saw in the patterns; found out miniature tigers and lions running up the bedroom walls, and squinting faces leering in the squares and diamonds of the floor cloth.

The solitary child lived on, surrounded by this arabesque work of his musing fancy, and no one understood him. Mrs. Blimber thought him "odd," and sometimes the servants said among themselves that little Dombey "moped;" but that was all.

Unless young Toots had some idea on the subject, to the expression of which he was wholly unequal. Ideas, like ghosts (according to the common notion of ghosts), must be spoken to a little before they will explain themselves; and Toots had long left off asking any questions of his own mind. Some mist there may have been, issuing from that leaden casket, his cranium, which, if it could have taken shape and form, would have become a genie; but it could not; and it only so far followed the example of the smoke in the Arabian story, as to roll out in a thick cloud, and there hang and hover. But it left a little figure visible upon a lonely shore, and Toots was always staring at it.

"How are you?" he would say to Paul fifty times a day.

"Quite well, sir, thank you," Paul would answer.

"Shake hands," would be Toots's next advance.

Which Paul, of course, would immediately do. Mr. Toots generally said again, after a long interval of staring and hard breathing, "How are you?" To which Paul again replied, "Quite well, sir, thank you."

One evening Mr. Toots was sitting at his desk, oppressed by correspondence, when a great purpose seemed to flash upon him. He laid down his pen, and went off to seek Paul, whom he found at last, after a long search, looking through the window of his little bedroom.

"I say!" cried Toots, speaking the moment he entered the room, lest he should forget it; "what do you think about?"

"Oh! I think about a great many things," replied Paul.

"Do you, though?" said Toots, appearing to consider that fact in itself surprising.

"If you had to die," said Paul, looking up into his face—Mr. Toots started, and seemed much disturbed.

"—Don't you think you would rather die on a moonlight night when the sky was quite clear, and the wind blowing, as it did last night?"

Mr. Toots said, looking doubtfully at Paul, and shaking his head, that he didn't know about that.

"Not blowing, at least," said Paul, "but sounding in the air like the sea sounds in the shells. It was a beautiful night. When I had listened to the water for a long time, I got up and looked out. There was a boat over there, in the full light of the moon; a boat with a sail."

The child looked at him so steadfastly, and spoke so earnestly, that Mr. Toots, feeling himself called upon to say something about this boat, said, "Smugglers." But with an impartial remembrance of there being two sides to every question, he added, "Or Preventive."

"A boat with a sail," repeated Paul, "in the full light of the moon. The sail like an arm, all silver. It went away into the distance, and what do you think it seemed to do as it moved with the waves?"

"Pitch," said Mr. Toots.

"It seemed to beckon," said the child, "to beckon me to come!—There she is! There she is!"

Toots was almost beside himself with dismay at this sudden exclamation, after what had gone before, and cried "Who?"

"My sister Florence!" cried Paul, "looking up here, and waving her hand. She sees me—she sees me! Good night, dear, good night, good night."

His quick transition to a state of unbounded pleasure, as he stood at his window, kissing and clapping his

hands : and the way in which the light retreated from his features as she passed out of his view, and left a patient melancholy on the little face : were too remarkable wholly to escape even Toots's notice. Their interview being interrupted at this moment by a visit from Mrs. Pipchin, who usually brought her black skirts to bear upon Paul just before dusk, once or twice a week, Toots had no opportunity of improving the occasion ; but it left so marked an impression on his mind, that he twice returned, after having exchanged the usual salutations, to ask Mrs. Pipchin how she did. This the irascible old lady conceived to be a deeply-devised and long-meditated insult, originating in the diabolical invention of the weak-eyed young man down-stairs, against whom she accordingly lodged a formal complaint with Doctor Blimber that very night ; who mentioned to the young man that if he ever did it again, he should be obliged to part with him.

The evenings being longer now, Paul stole up to his window every evening to look out for Florence. She always passed and re-passed at a certain time, until she saw him ; and their mutual recognition was a gleam of sunshine in Paul's daily life. Often after dark, one other figure walked alone before the doctor's house. He rarely joined them on the Saturday now. He could not bear it. He would rather come unrecognised, and look up at the windows where his son was qualifying for a man ; and wait, and watch, and plan, and hope.

Oh ! could he but have seen, or seen as others did, the slight spare boy above, watching the waves and clouds at twilight, with his earnest eyes, and breasting the window of his solitary cage when birds flew by, as if he would have emulated them, and soared away !

CHAPTER XIII.

Shipping Intelligence and Office Business.

MR. DOMBEY'S offices were in a court where there was an old-established stall of choice fruit at the corner ; where perambulating merchants, of both sexes, offered for sale at any time between the hours of ten and five, slippers, pocket-books, sponges, dogs' collars, and Windsor soap ; and sometimes a pointer or an oil-painting.

The pointer always came that way, with a view to the Stock Exchange, where a sporting taste (originating generally in bets of new hats) is much in vogue. The other commodities were addressed to the general public ; but they were never offered by the vendors to Mr. Dombey.

When he appeared, the dealers in those wares fell off respectfully. The principal slipper and dogs' collar man—who considered himself a public character, and whose portrait was screwed on to an artist's door in Cheapside—threw up his forefinger to the brim of his hat as Mr. Dombey went by. The ticket-porter, if he were not absent on a job, always ran officiously before, to open Mr. Dombey's office door as wide as possible, and hold it open, with his hat off, while he entered.

The clerks within were not a whit behind-hand in their demonstrations of respect. A solemn hush prevailed, as Mr. Dombey passed through the outer office. The wit of the Counting-House became in a moment as mute, as the row of leathern fire-buckets, hanging up behind him. Such vapid and flat day-light as filtered through the ground-glass windows, and skylights, leaving a black sediment upon the panes, showed the books and papers, and the figures bending over them, enveloped in a studious gloom, and as much abstracted in appearance, from the world without, as if they were assembled at the bottom of the sea; while a mouldy little strong room in the obscure perspective, where a shaded lamp was always burning, might have represented the cavern of some ocean-monster, looking on with a red eye at these mysteries of the deep.

When Perch, the messenger, whose place was on a little bracket, like a time-piece, saw Mr. Dombey come in—or rather, when he felt that he was coming, for he had usually an instinctive sense of his approach—he hurried into Mr. Dombey's room, stirred the fire, quarried fresh coals from the bowels of the coal box, hung the newspaper to air upon the fender, put the chair ready, and the screen in its place, and was round upon his heel on the instant of Mr. Dombey's entrance, to take his great-coat and hat, and hang them up. Then Perch took the newspaper, and gave it a turn or two in his hands before the fire, and laid it, deferentially, at Mr. Dombey's elbow. And so little objection had Perch to doing deferential in the last degree, that if he might have laid himself at Mr. Dombey's feet, or might have called him by some such title as used to be bestowed upon the Caliph Haroun Alraschid, he would have been all the better pleased.

As this honour would have been an innovation and an experiment, Perch was fain to content himself by expressing as well as he could, in his manner, You are the light of my Eyes. You are the Breath of my Soul. You are the commander of the Faithful Perch! With this imperfect happiness to cheer him, he would shut the door softly, walk away on tiptoe, and leave his great chief to be stared at, through a dome-shaped window in

the leads, by ugly chimney pots and backs of houses, and especially by the bold window of a hair-cutting saloon on a first floor, where a waxen effigy, bald as a Mussulman in the morning, and covered after eleven o'clock in the day, with luxuriant hair and whiskers in the latest Christian fashion, showed him the wrong side of its head for ever.

Between Mr. Dombey and the common world, as it was accessible through the medium of the outer office—to which Mr. Dombey's presence in his own room may be said to have struck like damp, or cold air—there were two degrees of descent. Mr. Carker in his own office was the first step; Mr. Morfin, in *his* own office, was the second. Each of these gentlemen occupied a little chamber like a bath-room, opening from the passage outside Mr. Dombey's door. Mr. Carker, as Grand Vizier, inhabited the room that was nearest to the Sultan. Mr. Morfin, as an officer of inferior state, inhabited the room that was nearest to the clerks.

The gentleman last mentioned was a cheerful-looking hazel-eyed elderly bachelor: gravely attired, as to his upper man, in black; and as to his legs, in pepper and salt colour. His dark hair was just touched here and there with specks of gray, as though the tread of Time had splashed it: and his whiskers were already white. He had a mighty respect for Mr. Dombey, and rendered him due homage; but as he was of a genial temper himself, and never wholly at his ease in that stately presence, he was disquieted by no jealousy of the many conferences enjoyed by Mr. Carker, and felt a secret satisfaction in having duties to discharge, which rarely exposed him to be singled out for such distinction. He was a great musical amateur in his way—after business; and had a paternal affection for his violoncello, which was once in every week transported from Islington, his place of abode, to a certain club-room hard by the Bank, where quartettes of the most tormenting and excruciating nature were executed every Wednesday evening by a private party. Mr. Carker was a gentleman thirty-eight or forty years old, of a florid complexion, and with two unbroken rows of glistening teeth, whose regularity and whiteness were quite distressing. It was impossible to escape the observation of them, for he showed them whenever he spoke; and bore so wide a smile upon his countenance (a smile, however, very rarely, indeed, extending beyond his mouth), that there was something in it like the snarl of a cat. He affected a stiff white cravat, after the example of his principal, and was always closely buttoned up and tightly dressed. His manner towards Mr. Dombey was deeply conceived and perfectly expressed. He was familiar with him, in the very ex-

tremity of his sense of the distance between them. "Mr. Dombey, to a man in your position from a man in mine, there is no show of subservience compatible with the transaction of business between us, that I should think sufficient. I frankly tell you, sir, I give it up altogether. I feel that I could not satisfy my own mind; and Heaven knows, Mr. Dombey, you can afford to dispense with the endeavour." If he had carried these words about with him, printed on a placard, and constantly offered it to Mr. Dombey's perusal on the breast of his coat, he could not have been more explicit than he was.

This was Carker the manager. Mr. Carker the junior, Walter's friend, was his brother; two or three years older than he, but widely removed in station. The younger brother's post was on the top of the official ladder; the elder brother's at the bottom. The elder brother never gained a stave, or raised his foot to mount one. Young men passed above his head, and rose and rose: but he was always at the bottom. He was quite resigned to occupy that low condition: never complained of it: and certainly never hoped to escape from it.

"How do you do this morning?" said Mr. Carker the manager, entering Mr. Dombey's room soon after his arrival one day: with a bundle of papers in his hand.

"How do you do, Carker?" said Mr. Dombey, rising from his chair, and standing with his back to the fire. "Have you anything there for me?"

"I don't know that I need trouble you," returned Carker, turning over the papers in his hand. "You have a committee to-day at three, you know."

"And one at three, three quarters," added Mr. Dombey.

"Catch you forgetting anything!" exclaimed Carker, still turning over his papers. "If Mr. Paul inherits your memory, he'll be a troublesome customer in the House. One of you is enough."

"You have an accurate memory of your own," said Mr. Dombey.

"Oh! I," returned the manager. "It's the only capital of a man like *me*."

Mr. Dombey did not look less pompous or at all displeased, as he stood leaning against the chimney-piece, surveying his (of course unconscious) clerk, from head to foot. The stiffness and nicety of Mr. Carker's dress, and a certain arrogance of manner, either natural to him or imitated from a pattern not far off, gave great additional effect to his humility. He seemed a man who would contend against the power that vanquished him, if he could, but who was utterly borne down by the greatness and superiority of Mr. Dombey.

"Is Morfin here?" asked Mr. Dombey after a short pause, during which Mr. Carker had been fluttering

his papers, and muttering little abstracts of their contents to himself.

"Morfin's here," he answered, looking up with his widest and most sudden smile; "humming musical recollections—of his last night's quartette party, I suppose—through the walls between us, and driving me half mad. I wish he'd make a bonfire of his violoncello, and burn his music books in it."

"You respect nobody, Carker, I think," said Mr. Dombey.

"No?" inquired Carker, with another wide and most feline show of his teeth. "Well! Not many people I believe. I wouldn't answer, perhaps," he murmured, as if he were only thinking it, "for more than one."

A dangerous quality, if real; and a not less dangerous one if feigned. But Mr. Dombey hardly seemed to think so, as he still stood with his back to the fire, drawn up to his full height, and looking at his head-clerk with a dignified composure, in which there seemed to lurk a stronger latent sense of power than usual.

"Talking of Morfin," resumed Mr. Carker, taking out one paper from the rest, "he reports a junior dead in the agency at Barbados, and proposes to reserve a passage in the *Son* and *Heir*—she'll sail in a month or so—for the successor. You don't care who goes, I suppose? We have nobody of that sort here."

Mr. Dombey shook his head with supreme indifference.

"It's no very precious appointment," observed Mr. Carker, taking up a pen, with which to endorse a memorandum on the back of the paper. "I hope he may bestow it on some orphan nephew of a musical friend. It may perhaps stop *his* fiddle-playing, if he has a gift that way. Who's that? Come in!"

"I beg your pardon, Mr. Carker. I didn't know you were here, sir," answered Walter, appearing with some letters in his hand, unopened, and newly arrived. "Mr. Carker the junior, sir—"

At the mention of this name, Mr. Carker the manager was, or affected to be, touched to the quick with shame and humiliation. He cast his eyes full on Mr. Dombey with an altered and apologetic look, abased them on the ground, and remained for a moment without speaking.

"I thought, sir," he said suddenly and angrily, turning on Walter, "that you had been before requested not to drag Mr. Carker the junior into your conversation."

"I beg your pardon," returned Walter. "I was only going to say that Mr. Carker the junior had told me he believed you were gone out, or I should not have knocked at the door when you were engaged with Mr. Dombey. These are letters for Mr. Dombey, sir."

"Very well, sir," returned Mr. Carker the manager, plucking them sharply from his hand. "Go about your business."

But in taking them with so little ceremony, Mr. Carker dropped one on the floor, and did not see what he had done; neither did Mr. Dombey observe the letter lying near his feet. Walter hesitated for a moment, thinking that one or the other of them would notice it; but finding that neither did, he stopped, came back, picked it up, and laid it himself on Mr. Dombey's desk. The letters were post-letters; and it happened that the one in question was Mrs. Pipchin's regular report, directed as usual—for Mrs. Pipchin was but an indifferent pen-woman—by Florence. Mr. Dombey having his attention silently called to this letter by Walter, started, and looked fiercely at him, as if he believed that he had purposely selected it from all the rest.

"You can leave the room, sir!" said Mr. Dombey, haughtily.

He crushed the letter in his hand; and having watched Walter out at the door, put it in his pocket without breaking the seal.

"You want somebody to send to the West Indies, you were saying," observed Mr. Dombey, hurriedly.

"Yes," replied Carker.

"Send young Gay."

"Good, very good indeed. Nothing easier," said Mr. Carker, without any show of surprise, and taking up the pen to re-indorse the letter, as coolly as he had done before. "'Send young Gay.'"

"Call him back," said Mr. Dombey.

Mr. Carker was quick to do so, and Walter was quick to return.

"Gay," said Mr. Dombey, turning a little to look at him over his shoulder. "Here is a—"

"An opening," said Mr. Carker, with his mouth stretched to the utmost.

"In the West Indies. At Barbados. I am going to send you," said Mr. Dombey, scorning to embellish the bare truth, "to fill a junior situation in the counting-house at Barbados. Let your uncle know from me, that I have chosen you to go to the West Indies."

Walter's breath was so completely taken away by his astonishment, that he could hardly find enough for the repetition of the words "West Indies."

"Somebody must go," said Mr. Dombey, "and you are young and healthy, and your uncle's circumstances are not good. Tell your uncle that you are appointed. You will not go yet. There will be an interval of a month—or two perhaps."

"Shall I remain there, sir?" inquired Walter.

“Will you remain there, sir!” repeated Mr. Dombey, turning a little more round towards him. “What do you mean? What does he mean, Carker?”

“Live there, sir,” faltered Walter.

“Certainly,” returned Mr. Dombey.

Walter bowed.

“That’s all,” said Mr. Dombey, resuming his letters.

“You will explain to him in good time about the usual outfit and so forth, Carker, of course. He needn’t wait, Carker.”

“You needn’t wait, Gay,” observed Mr. Carker: bare to the gums.

“Unless,” said Mr. Dombey, stopping in his reading without looking off the letter, and seeming to listen.

“Unless he has anything to say.”

“No, sir,” returned Walter, agitated and confused, and almost stunned, as an infinite variety of pictures presented themselves to his mind; among which Captain Cuttle, in his glazed hat, transfixed with astonishment at Mrs. MacStinger’s, and his uncle bemoaning his loss in the little back parlour, held prominent places. “I hardly know—I—I am much obliged, sir.”

“He needn’t wait, Carker,” said Mr. Dombey.

And as Mr. Carker again echoed the words, and also collected his papers as if he were going away too, Walter felt that his lingering any longer would be an unparadonable intrusion—especially as he had nothing to say—and therefore walked out quite confounded.

Going along the passage, with the mingled consciousness and helplessness of a dream, he heard Mr. Dombey’s door shut again, as Mr. Carker came out; and immediately afterwards that gentleman called to him.

“Bring your friend Mr. Carker the junior to my room, sir, if you please.”

Walter went to the outer office and apprised Mr. Carker the junior of his errand, who accordingly came out from behind a partition where he sat alone in one corner, and returned with him to the room of Mr. Carker the manager.

That gentleman was standing with his back to the fire, and his hands under his coat-tails, looking over his white cravat, as unpromisingly as Mr. Dombey himself could have looked. He received them without any change in his attitude or softening of his harsh and black expression: merely signing to Walter to close the door.

“John Carker,” said the manager, when this was done, turning suddenly upon his brother, with his two rows of teeth bristling as if he would have bitten him, “what is the league between you and this young man, in virtue of which I am haunted and hunted by the mention of your name? Is it not enough for you, John

Carker, that I am your near relation and can't detach myself from that—"

"Say disgrace, James," interposed the other in a low voice, finding that he stammered for a word. "You mean it, and have reason, say disgrace."

"From that disgrace," assented his brother, with keen emphasis, "but is the fact to be blurted out and trumpeted, and proclaimed continually in the presence of the very house! In moments of confidence too? Do you think your name is calculated to harmonise in this place with trust and confidence, John Carker?"

"No," returned the other. "No, James. God knows I have no such thought."

"What is your thought then?" said his brother, "and why do you thrust yourself in my way? Haven't you injured me enough already?"

"I have never injured you, James, willfully."

"You are my brother," said the manager. "That's injury enough."

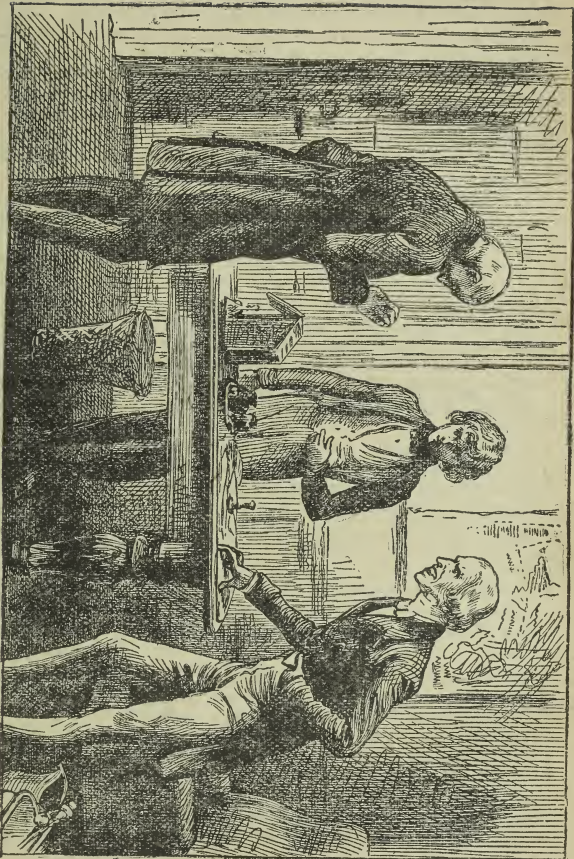
"I wish I could undo it, James."

"I wish you could and would."

During this conversation, Walter had looked from one brother to the other, with pain and amazement. He who was the senior in years, and junior in the house, stood, with his eyes cast upon the ground, and his head bowed, humbly listening to the reproaches of the other. Though these were rendered very bitter by the tone and look with which they were accompanied, and by the presence of Walter whom they so much surprised and shocked, he entered no other protest against them than by slightly raising his right hand in a deprecatory manner, as if he would have said "Spare me!" So, had they been blows, and he a brave man, under strong constraint, and weakened by bodily suffering, he might have stood before the executioner.

Generous and quick in all his emotions, and regarding himself as the innocent occasion of these taunts, Walter now struck in, with all the earnestness he felt.

"Mr. Carker," he said, addressing himself to the manager. "Indeed, indeed, this is my fault solely. In a kind of heedlessness for which I cannot blame myself enough, I have, I have no doubt, mentioned Mr. Carker the junior much oftener than was necessary; and have allowed his name sometimes to slip through my lips, when it was against your express wish. But it has been my own mistake, sir. We have never exchanged one word upon the subject—very few, indeed, upon any subject. And it has not been," added Walter after a moment's pause, "all heedlessness on my part, sir; for I have felt an interest in Mr. Carker ever since I have been



WALTER HAD LOOKED FROM ONE BROTHER TO THE OTHER WITH PAIN AND AMAZEMENT.

—Dombey and Son, Vol. Eleven, page 503.

here, and have hardly been able to help speaking of him sometimes, when I have thought of him so much !”

Walter said this from his soul, and with the very breath of honour. For he looked upon the bowed head, and the downcast eyes, and upraised hand, and thought, ‘I have felt it; and why should I not avow it in behalf of this unfriended, broken man !’

“In truth you have avoided me, Mr. Carker,” said Walter, with the tears rising to his eyes; so true was his compassion. “I know it to my disappointment and regret. When I first came here, and ever since, I am sure I have tried to be as much your friend as one of my age could presume to be; but it has been of no use.”

“And observe,” said the manager, taking him up quickly, “it will be of still less use, Gay, if you persist in forcing Mr. John Carker’s name on people’s attention. That is not the way to befriend Mr. John Carker. Ask him if he thinks it is.”

“It is no service to me,” said the brother. “It only leads to such a conversation as the present, which I need not say I could have well spared. No one can be a better friend to me:” he spoke here very distinctly, as if he would impress it upon Walter: “than in forgetting me, and leaving me to go my way, unquestioned and unnoticed.”

“Your memory not being retentive, Gay, of what you are told by others,” said Mr. Carker the manager, warming himself with great and increased satisfaction, “I thought it well that you should be told this from the best authority,” nodding towards his brother. “You are not likely to forget it now, I hope. That’s all, Gay. You can go.”

Walter passed out at the door and was about to close it after him, when hearing the voice of the brothers again, and also the mention of his own name, he stood irresolutely, with his hand upon the lock, and the door ajar, uncertain whether to return or go away. In this position he could not help overhearing what followed.

“Think of me more leniently, if you can, James,” said John Carker, “when I tell you I have had—how could I help having, with my history, written here”—striking himself upon the breast, “my whole heart awakened by my observation of that boy, Walter Gay. I saw in him when he first came here, almost my other self.”

“Your other self!” repeated the manager, disdainfully
 “Not as I am, but as I was when I first came here too; as sanguine, giddy, youthful, inexperienced; flushed with the same restless and adventurous fancies; and full of the same qualities, fraught with the same capacity of leading on to good or evil.”

"I hope not," said his brother, with some hidden and sarcastic meaning in his tone.

"You strike me sharply ; and your hand is steady, and your thrust is very deep," returned the other, speaking (or so Walter thought) as if some cruel weapon actually stabbed him as he spoke. "I imagined all this when he was a boy. I believed it. It was a truth to me. I saw him lightly walking on the edge of an unseen gulf where so many others walk with equal gaiety, and from which—"

"The old excuse," interrupted his brother as he stirred the fire. "So many. Go on. Say, so many fall."

"From which ONE traveller fell," returned the other, "who set forward, on his way, a boy like him, and missed his footing more and more, and slipped a little and a little lower, and went on stumbling still, until he fell headlong and found himself below a shattered man. Think what I suffered when I watched that boy."

"You have only yourself to thank for it," returned the brother.

"Only myself," he assented with a sigh. "I don't seek to divide the blame or shame."

"You *have* divided the shame," James Carker muttered through his teeth. And through so many and such close teeth, he could mutter well.

"Ah James," returned his brother, speaking for the first time in an accent of reproach, and seeming, by the sound of his voice, to have covered his face with his hands, "I have been, since then, a useful foil to you. You have trodden on me freely in your climbing up. Don't spurn me with your heel !"

A silence ensued. After a time, Mr. Carker the manager was heard rustling among his papers, as if he had resolved to bring the interview to a conclusion. At the same time his brother withdrew nearer to the door.

"That's all," he said. "I watched him with such trembling and such fear, as was some little punishment to me, until he passed the place where I first fell ; and then, though I had been his father, I believe I never could have thanked God more devoutly. I didn't dare to warn him, and advise him : but if I had seen direct cause, I would have shown him my example. I was afraid to be seen speaking with him, lest it should be thought I did him harm, and tempted him to evil, and corrupted him : or lest I really should. There may be such contagion in me ; I don't know. Piece out my history, in connexion with young Walter Gay, and what he has made me feel, and think of me more leniently, James, if you can."

With these words he came out to where Walter was

standing. He turned a little paler when he saw him there, and paler yet when Walter caught him by the hand, and said in a whisper :

“Mr. Carker, pray let me thank you ! Let me say how much I feel for you ! How sorry I am to have been the unhappy cause of all this ! How I almost look upon you now as my protector and guardian ! How very, very much, I feel obliged to you and pity you !” said Walter, squeezing both his hands, and hardly knowing, in his agitation, what he did or said.

Mr. Morfin’s room being close at hand and empty, and the door wide open, they moved thither by one accord ; the passage being seldom free from some one passing to or fro. When they were there, and Walter saw in Mr. Carker’s face some traces of the emotion within, he almost felt as if he had never seen the face before ; it was so greatly changed.

“Walter,” he said, laying his hand on his shoulder. “I am far removed from you, and may I ever be. Do you know what I am ?”

“What you are !” appeared to hang on Walter’s lips, as he regarded him attentively.

“It was begun,” said Carker, “before my twenty-first birthday—led up to, long before, but not begun till near that time. I had robbed them when I came of age. I robbed them afterwards. Before my twenty-second birthday, it was all found out ; and then, Walter, from all men’s society, I died.”

Again his last few words hung trembling upon Walter’s lips, but he could neither utter them, nor any of his own.

“The House was very good to me. May Heaven reward the old man for his forbearance ! This one, too, his son, who was then newly in the firm, where I had held great trust ! I was called into that room which is now his—I have never entered it since—and came out what you know me. For many years I sat in my present seat, alone as now, but then a known and recognized example to the rest. They were all merciful to me, and I lived. Time has altered that part of my poor expiation ; and I think, except the three heads of the House, there is no one here who knows my story rightly. Before the little boy grows up, and has it told to him, my corner may be vacant. I would rather that it might be so ! This is the only change to me since that day, when I left all youth, and hope, and good men’s company, behind me in that room. God bless you, Walter ! Keep you, and all dear to you, in honesty, or strike them dead !”

Some recollection of his trembling from head to foot, as if with excessive cold, and of his bursting into tears, was all that Walter could add to this, when he tried to recall exactly what had passed between them.

When Walter saw him next, he was bending over his desk, in his old silent, drooping, humbled way. Then, observing him at his work, and feeling how resolved he evidently was that no further intercourse should arise between them, and thinking again and again on all he had seen and heard that morning in so short a time, in connexion with the history of both the Carkers, Walter could hardly believe that he was under orders for the West Indies, and would soon be lost to Uncle Sol, and Captain Cuttle, and to glimpses few and far between of Florence Dombey—no, he meant Paul—and to all he loved and liked, and looked for, in his daily life.

But it was true, and the news had already penetrated to the outer office ; for while he sat with a heavy heart, pondering on these things, and resting his head upon his arm, Perch, the messenger, descending from his mahogany bracket, and jogging his elbow, begged his pardon, but wished to say in his ear, Did he think he could arrange to send home to England a jar of preserved ginger, cheap, for Mrs. Perch's own eating, in the course of her recovery from her next confinement ?

CHAPTER XIV.

Paul grows more and more Old-fashioned, and goes Home for the Holidays.

WHEN the Midsummer vacation approached, no indecent manifestations of joy were exhibited by the leaden-eyed young gentlemen assembled at Doctor Blimber's. Any such violent expression as "breaking up," would have been quite inapplicable to that polite establishment. The young gentlemen oozed away, semi-annually, to their own homes ; but they never broke up. They would have scorned the action.

Tozer, who was constantly galled and tormented by a starched white cambric neck-kerchief, which he wore at the express desire of Mrs. Tozer, his parent, who, designing him for the Church, was of opinion that he couldn't be in that forward state of preparation too soon—Tozer said, indeed, that choosing between two evils, he thought he would rather stay where he was than go home. However inconsistent this declaration might appear with that passage in Tozer's Essay on the subject, wherein he had observed "that the thoughts of home and all its recollections, awakened in his mind the most pleasing emotions of anticipation and delight," and had also likened himself to a Roman general, flushed with a recent victory over the Iceni, or laden with Carthaginian spoil, advancing within a few hours' march of the Capi-

tol, presupposed, for the purposes of the simile, to be the dwelling-place of Mrs. Tozer, still it was very sincerely made. For it seemed that Tozer had a dreadful uncle, who not only volunteered examinations of him, in the holidays, on abstruse points, but twisted innocent events and things, and wrenched them to the same fell purpose. So that if this uncle took him to the play, or, on a similar pretence of kindness, carried him to see a giant, or a dwarf, or a conjuror, or anything, Tozer knew he had read up some classical allusion to the subject beforehand, and was thrown into a state of mortal apprehension: not foreseeing where he might break out, or what authority he might not quote against him.

As to Briggs, *his* father made no show of artifice about it. He never would leave him alone. So numerous and severe were the mental trials of that unfortunate youth in vacation time, that the friends of the family (then resident near Bayswater, London) seldom approached the ornamental piece of water in Kensington Gardens, without a vague expectation of seeing Master Briggs's hat floating on the surface, and an unfinished exercise lying on the bank. Briggs, therefore, was not at all sanguine on the subject of holidays; and these two sharers of little Paul's bedroom were so fair a sample of the young gentlemen in general, that the most elastic among them contemplated the arrival of those festive periods with genteel resignation.

It was far otherwise with little Paul. The end of these first holidays was to witness his separation from Florence, but who ever looked forward to the end of holidays whose beginning was not yet come! Not Paul, assuredly. As the happy time drew near, the lions and tigers climbing up the bedroom walls, became quite tame and frolicsome. The grim sly faces in the squares and diamonds of the floor-cloth, relaxed and peeped out at him with less wicked eyes. The grave old clock had more of personal interest in the tone of its formal inquiry; and the restless sea went rolling on all night to the sounding of a melancholy strain—yet it was pleasant too—that rose and fell with the waves, and rocked him, as it were, to sleep.

Mr. Feeder, B.A., seemed to think that he, too, would enjoy the holidays very much. Mr. Toots projected a life of holidays from that time forth; for, as he regularly informed Paul every day, it was his "last half" at Doctor Blimber's, and he was going to begin to come into his property directly.

It was perfectly understood between Paul and Mr. Toots, that they were intimate friends, notwithstanding their distance in point of years and station. As the vacation approached, and Mr. Toots breathed harder and

stared oftener in Paul's society, than he had done before, Paul knew that he meant he was sorry they were going to lose sight of each other, and felt very much obliged to him for his patronage and good opinion.

It was even understood by Doctor Blimber, Mrs. Blimber, and Miss Blimber, as well as by the young gentlemen in general, that Toots had somehow constituted himself protector and guardian of Dombey, and the circumstance became so notorious, even to Mrs. Pipchin, that the good old creature cherished feelings of bitterness and jealousy against Toots; and, in the sanctuary of her own home, repeatedly denounced him as "a chuckleheaded noodle." Whereas the innocent Toots had no more idea of awakening Mrs. Pipchin's wrath, than he had of any other definite possibility or proposition. On the contrary, he was disposed to consider her rather a remarkable character, with many points of interest about her. For this reason he smiled on her with so much urbanity, and asked her how she did, so often, in the course of her visits to little Paul, that at last she one night told him plainly, she wasn't used to it, whatever he might think; and she could not, and she would not bear it, either from himself or any other puppy then existing; at which unexpected acknowledgment of his civilities, Mr. Toots was so alarmed that he secreted himself in a retired spot until she had gone. Nor did he ever again face the doughty Mrs. Pipchin, under Doctor Blimber's roof.

They were within two or three weeks of the holidays, when, one day, Cornelia Blimber called Paul into her room, and said, "Dombey, I am going to send home your analysis."

"Thank you, ma'am," returned Paul.

"You know what I mean, do you, Dombey?" inquired Miss Blimber, looking hard at him through the spectacles.

"No, ma'am," said Paul.

"Dombey, Dombey," said Miss Blimber, "I begin to be afraid you are a sad boy. When you don't know the meaning of an expression, why don't you seek for information?"

"Mrs. Pipchin told me I wasn't to ask questions," returned Paul.

"I must beg you not to mention Mrs. Pipchin to me, on any account, Dombey," returned Miss Blimber. "I couldn't think of allowing it. The course of study here, is very far removed from anything of that sort. A repetition of such allusions would make it necessary for me to request to hear without a mistake, before breakfast-time to-morrow morning, from *Verbum personale* down to *simillima cygno*."

"I didn't mean, ma'am," began little Paul.

"I must trouble you not to tell me that you didn't mean, if you please, Dombey," said Miss Blimber, who preserved an awful politeness in her admonitions. "That is a line of argument I couldn't dream of permitting."

Paul felt it safest to say nothing at all, so he only looked at Miss Blimber's spectacles. Miss Blimber having shaking her head at him gravely, referred to a paper lying before her.

"'Analysis of the character of P. Dombey.' If my recollection serves me," said Miss Blimber breaking off, "the word analysis as opposed to synthesis, is thus defined by Walker 'The resolution of an object, whether of the senses or of the intellect, into its first elements.' As opposed to synthesis, you observe. Now you know what analysis is, Dombey."

Dombey didn't seem to be absolutely blinded by the light let in upon his intellect, but he made Miss Blimber a little bow.

"'Analysis,' resumed Miss Blimber, casting her eye over the paper, 'of the character of P. Dombey.' I find that the natural capacity of Dombey is extremely good; and that his general disposition to study may be stated in an equal ratio. Thus taking eight as our standard and highest number, I find these qualities in Dombey stated each at six three-fourths!"

Miss Blimber paused to see how Paul received this news. Being undecided whether six three-fourths, meant six pounds fifteen, or sixpence three farthings, or six foot three, or three quarters past six, or six somethings that he hadn't learn't yet, with three unknown something elses over, Paul rubbed his hands and looked straight at Miss Blimber. It happened to answer as well as anything else he could have done; and Cornelia proceeded.

"'Violence two. Selfishness two. Inclination to low company, as evinced in the case of a person named Glubb, originally seven, but since reduced. Gentlemanly demeanour four, and improving with advancing years.' Now what I particularly wish to call your attention to, Dombey, is the general observation at the close of this analysis."

Paul set himself to follow it with great care.

"'It may be generally observed of Dombey,'" said Miss Blimber, reading in a loud voice, and at every second word directing her spectacles towards the little figure before her: "'that his abilities and inclinations are good, and that he has made as much progress as under the circumstances could have been expected. But it is to be lamented of this young gentleman that he is

singular (what is usually termed old-fashioned) in his character and conduct, and that, without presenting anything in either which distinctly calls for reprobation, he is often very unlike other young gentlemen of his age and social position.' Now Dombey," said Miss Blimber, laying down the paper, "do you understand that?"

"I think I do, ma'am," said Paul.

"This analysis, you see, Dombey," Miss Blimber continued, "is going to be sent home to your respected parent. It will naturally be very painful to him to find that you are singular in your character and conduct. It is naturally painful to us; for we can't like you, you know, Dombey, as well as we could wish."

She touched the child upon a tender point. He had secretly become more and more solicitous from day to day, as the time of his departure drew more near, that all the house should like him. For some hidden reason, very imperfectly understood by himself—if understood at all—he felt a gradually increasing impulse of affection, towards almost everything and everybody in the place. He could not bear to think that they would be quite indifferent to him when he was gone. He wanted them to remember him kindly; and he had made it his business even to conciliate a great hoarse shaggy dog, chained up at the back of the house, who had previously been the terror of his life: that even he might miss him when he was no longer there.

Little thinking that in this, he only showed again the difference between himself and his compeers, poor tiny Paul set it forth to Miss Blimber as well as he could, and begged her, in despite of the official analysis, to have the goodness to try and like him. To Mrs. Blimber, who had joined them, he preferred the same petition: and when that lady could not forbear, even in his presence, from giving utterance to her often-repeated opinion, that he was an odd child, Paul told her that he was sure she was quite right; that he thought it must be his bones, but he didn't know; and that he hoped she would overlook it, for he was fond of them all.

"Not so fond," said Paul, with a mixture of timidity and perfect frankness, which was one of the most peculiar and most engaging qualities of the child, "not so fond as I am of Florence, of course: that could never be. You couldn't expect that, could you, ma'am?"

"Oh! the old-fashioned little soul!" cried Mrs. Blimber in a whisper.

"But I like everybody here very much," pursued Paul, "and I should grieve to go away, and think that any one was glad that I was gone, or didn't care."

Mrs. Blimber was now quite sure that Paul was the

oddest child in the world ; and when she told the doctor what had passed, the doctor did not controvert his wife's opinion. But he said, as he had said before, when Paul first came, that study would do much ; and he also said, as he had said on that occasion, " Bring him on, Cornelia ! Bring him on ! "

Cornelia had always brought him on as vigorously as she could ; and Paul had had a hard life of it. But over and above his getting through the tasks, he had long had another purpose always present to him, and to which he still held fast. It was, to be a gentle, useful, quiet little fellow, always striving to secure the love and attachment of the rest ; and though he was yet often to be seen at his old post on the stairs, or watching the waves and clouds from his solitary window, he was oftener found, too, among the other boys, modestly rendering them some little voluntary service. Thus it came to pass, that even among those rigid and absorbed young anchorites, who mortified themselves beneath the roof of Doctor Blimber, Paul was an object of general interest ; a fragile little plaything that they all liked, and that no one would have thought of treating roughly. But he could not change his nature, or rewrite the analysis ; and so they all agreed that Dombey was old-fashioned.

There were some immunities, however, attaching to the character enjoyed by no one else. They could have better spared a newer-fashioned child, and that alone was much. When the others only bowed to Doctor Blimber and family on retiring for the night, Paul would stretch out his morsel of a hand, and boldly shake the doctor's ; also Mrs. Blimber's ; also Cornelia's. If anybody was to be begged off from impending punishment, Paul was always the delegate. The weak-eyed young man himself had once consulted him, in reference to a little breakage of glass and china. And it was darkly rumoured that the butler, regarding him with favour such as that stern man had never shown before to mortal boy, had sometimes mingled porter with his table-beer to make him strong.

Over and above these extensive privileges, Paul had free right of entry to Mr. Feeder's room, from which apartment he had twice led Mr. Toots into the open air, in a state of faintness, consequent on an unsuccessful attempt to smoke a very blunt cigar : one of a bundle which that young gentleman had covertly purchased on the shingle from a most desperate smuggler, who had acknowledged, in confidence, that two hundred pounds was the price set upon his head, dead or alive, by the Custom House. It was a snug room, Mr. Feeder's, with his bed in another little room inside of it ; and a

flute, which Mr. Feeder couldn't play yet, but was going to make a point of learning, he said, hanging up over the fire-place. There were some books in it, too, and a fishing-rod ; for Mr. Feeder said he should certainly make a point of learning to fish, when he could find time. Mr. Feeder had amassed, with similar intentions, a beautiful little curly second-hand key-bugle, a chess-board and men, a Spanish Grammar, a set of sketching-materials, and a pair of boxing gloves. The art of self-defence Mr. Feeder said he should undoubtedly make a point of learning, as he considered it the duty of every man to do ; for it might lead to the protection of a female in distress.

But Mr. Feeder's great possession was a large green jar of snuff, which Mr. Toots had brought down as a present, at the close of the last vacation ; and for which he had paid a high price, as having been the genuine property of the Prince Regent. Neither Mr. Toots nor Mr. Feeder could partake of this or any other snuff, even in the most stinted and moderate degree, without being seized with convulsions of sneezing. Nevertheless it was their great delight to moisten a box-full with cold tea, stir it up on a piece of parchment with a paper-knife, and devote themselves to its consumption then and there. In the course of which cramming of their noses, they endured surprising torments with the constancy of martyrs : and drinking table-beer at intervals, felt all the glories of dissipation.

To little Paul sitting silent in their company, and by the side of his chief patron, Mr. Toots, there was a dread charm in these reckless occasions ; and when Mr. Feeder spoke of the dark mysteries of London, and told Mr. Toots that he was going to observe it himself closely in all its ramifications in the approaching holidays, and for that purpose had made arrangements to board with two old maiden ladies at Peckham, Paul regarded him as if he were the hero of some book of travels or wild adventure, and was almost afraid of such a slashing person.

Going into this room one evening, when the holidays were very near, Paul found Mr. Feeder filling up the blanks in some printed letters, while some others, already filled up and strewn before him, were being folded and sealed by Mr. Toots. Mr. Feeder said, "Aha, Dombey, there you are, are you ?"—for they were always kind to him, and glad to see him—and then said, tossing one of the letters towards him, "And *there* you are, too, Dombey. That's yours."

"Mine, sir ?" said Paul.

"Your invitation," returned Mr. Feeder.

Paul, looking at it, found, in copper-plate print, with the exception of his own name and the date, which were

in Mr. Feeder's penmanship, that Doctor and Mrs. Blimber requested the pleasure of Mr. P. Dombey's company at an early party on Wednesday evening the seventeenth instant; and that the hour was half-past seven o'clock; and that the object was quadrilles. Mr. Toots also showed him, by holding up a companion sheet of paper, that Doctor and Mrs. Blimber requested the pleasure of Mr. Toots's company at an early party on Wednesday evening the seventeenth instant, when the hour was half-past seven o'clock, and when the object was quadrilles. He also found, on glancing at the table where Mr. Feeder sat, that the pleasure of Mr. Briggs's company, and of Mr. Tozer's company, and of every young gentleman's company, was requested by Doctor and Mrs. Blimber on the same genteel occasion.

Mr. Feeder then told him, to his great joy, that his sister was invited, and that it was a half-yearly event, and that, as the holidays began that day, he could go away with his sister after the party, if he liked, which Paul interrupted him to say he *would* like, very much. Mr. Feeder then gave him to understand that he would be expected to inform Doctor and Mrs. Blimber, in superfine small-hand, that Mr. P. Dombey would be happy to have the honour of waiting on them, in accordance with their polite invitation. Lastly, Mr. Feeder said, he had better not refer to the festive occasion, in the hearing of Doctor and Mrs. Blimber; as these preliminaries, and the whole of the arrangements, were conducted on principles of classicality and high breeding; and that Doctor and Mrs. Blimber on the one hand, and the young gentlemen on the other, were supposed, in their scholastic capacities, not to have the least idea of what was in the wind.

Paul thanked Mr. Feeder for these hints, and pocketing his invitation, sat down on a stool by the side of Mr. Toots as usual. But Paul's head, which had long been ailing more or less, and was sometimes very heavy and painful, felt so uneasy that night, that he was obliged to support it on his hand. And yet it dropped so that, by little and little it sunk on Mr. Toots's knee, and rested there, as if it had no care to be ever lifted up again.

That was no reason why he should be deaf; but he must have been, he thought, for, by and by, he heard Mr. Feeder calling in his ear, and gently shaking him to rouse his attention. And when he raised his head, quite scared, and looked about him, he found that Doctor Blimber had come into the room; and that the window was open, and that his forehead was wet with sprinkled water; though how all this had been done without his knowledge, was very curious indeed.

"Ah! Come, come! That's well! How is my little friend now?" said Doctor Blimber, encouragingly.

"Oh, quite well, thank you, sir," said Paul.

But there seemed to be something the matter with the floor, for he couldn't stand upon it steadily; and with the walls too, for they were inclined to turn round and round, and could only be stopped by being looked at very hard indeed. Mr. Toots's head had the appearance of being at once bigger and farther off than was quite natural; and when he took Paul in his arms, to carry him up-stairs, Paul observed with astonishment that the door was in quite a different place from that in which he had expected to find it, and almost thought, at first, that Mr. Toots was going to walk straight up the chimney.

It was very kind of Mr. Toots to carry him to the top of the house so tenderly; and Paul told him that it was. But Mr. Toots said that he would do a great deal more than that, if he could; and indeed he did more as it was: for he helped Paul to undress, and helped him to bed, in the kindest manner possible, and then sat down by the bedside and chuckled very much; while Mr. Feeder, B.A., leaning over the bottom of the bedstead, set all the little bristles on his head bolt upright with his bony hands, and then made believe to spar at Paul with great science, on account of his being all right again, which was so uncommonly facetious, and kind too in Mr. Feeder, that Paul, not being able to make up his mind whether it was best to laugh or cry at him, did both at once.

How Mr. Toots melted away, and Mr. Feeder changed into Mrs. Pipchin, Paul never thought of asking; neither was he at all curious to know: but when he saw Mrs. Pipchin standing at the bottom of the bed instead of Mr. Feeder, he cried out, "Mrs. Pipchin, don't tell Florence!"

"Don't tell Florence what, my little Paul?" said Mrs. Pipchin, coming round to the bedside, and sitting down in the chair.

"About me," said Paul.

"No, no," said Mrs. Pipchin.

"What do you think I mean to do when I grow up, Mrs. Pipchin?" inquired Paul, turning his face towards her on his pillow, and resting his chin wistfully on his folded hands.

Mrs. Pipchin couldn't guess.

"I mean," said Paul, "to put my money all together in one Bank, never try to get any more, go away into the country with my darling Florence, have a beautiful garden, fields and woods, and live there with her all my life!"

"Indeed!" cried Mrs. Pipchin.

"Yes," said Paul. "That's what I mean to do, when I—" He stopped, and pondered for a moment.

Mrs. Pipchin's gray eye scanned his thoughtful face.

"If I grow up," said Paul. Then he went on immediately to tell Mrs. Pipchin all about the party, about Florence's invitation, about the pride he would have in the admiration that would be felt for her by all the boys, about their being so kind to him and fond of him, about his being so fond of them, and about his being so glad of it. Then he told Mrs. Pipchin about the analysis, and about his being certainly old-fashioned, and took Mrs. Pipchin's opinion on that point, and whether she knew why it was, and what it meant. Mrs. Pipchin denied the fact altogether, as the shortest way of getting out of the difficulty; but Paul was far from satisfied with that reply, and looked so searchingly at Mrs. Pipchin for a truer answer, that she was obliged to get up and look out of the window to avoid his eyes.

There was a certain calm apothecary, who attended at the establishment when any of the young gentlemen were ill, and somehow *he* got into the room and appeared at the bedside, with Mrs. Blimber. How they came there, or how long they had been there, Paul didn't know; but when he saw them, he sat up in bed, and answered all the apothecary's questions at full length, and whispered to him that Florence was not to know anything about it if he pleased, and that he had set his mind upon her coming to the party. He was very chatty with the apothecary, and they parted excellent friends. Lying down again with his eyes shut, he heard the apothecary say, out of the room and quite a long way off—or he dreamed it—that there was a want of vital power (what was that, Paul wondered!) and great constitutional weakness. That as the little fellow had set his heart on parting with his schoolmates on the seventeenth, it would be better to indulge the fancy if he grew no worse. That he was glad to hear from Mrs. Pipchin, that the little fellow would go to his friends in London on the eighteenth. That he would write to Mr. Dombey, when he should have gained a better knowledge of the case, and before that day. That there was no immediate cause for—what? Paul lost that word. And that the little fellow had a fine mind, but was an old-fashioned boy.

What old fashion could that be, Paul wondered with a palpitating heart, that was so visibly expressed in him; so plainly seen by so many people!

He could neither make it out, nor trouble himself long with the effort. Mrs. Pipchin was again beside him, if she had ever been away (he thought she had gone out with the doctor, but it was all a dream perhaps), and presently a bottle and glass got into her hands magically, and she poured out the contents for him. After that, he

had some real good jelly, which Mrs. Blimber brought to him herself ; and then he was so well, that Mrs. Pipchin went home, at his urgent solicitation, and Briggs and Tozer came to bed. Poor Briggs grumbled terribly about his own analysis, which could hardly have discomposed him more if it had been a chemical process ; but he was very good to Paul, and so was Tozer, and so were all the rest, for they every one looked in before going to bed, and said, "How are you now, Dombey?" "Cheer up, little Dombey!" and so forth. After Briggs had got into bed, he lay awake for a long time, still bemoaning his analysis, and saying he knew it was all wrong, and they couldn't have analysed a murderer worse, and how would Doctor Blimber like it if his pocket-money depended on it? It was very easy, Briggs said, to make a galley-slave of a boy all the half-year, and then score him up idle ; and to crib two dinners a-week out of his board, and then score him up greedy ; but that wasn't going to be submitted to, he believed, was it! Oh! Ah!

Before the weak-eyed young man performed on the gong next morning, he came up-stairs to Paul and told him he was to lie still, which Paul very gladly did. Mrs. Pipchin reappeared a little before the apothecary, and a little after the good young woman whom Paul had seen cleaning the stove on the first morning (how long ago it seemed now!) had brought him his breakfast. There was another consultation a long way off, or else Paul dreamed it again ; and then the apothecary, coming back with Doctor and Mrs. Blimber, said :

"Yes, I think, Doctor Blimber, we may release this young gentleman from his books just now ; the vacation being so very near at hand."

"By all means," said Doctor Blimber. "My love, you will inform Cornelia, if you please."

"Assuredly," said Mrs. Blimber.

The apothecary bending down, looked closely into Paul's eyes, and felt his head, and his pulse, and his heart, with so much interest and care, that Paul said, "Thank you, sir."

"Our little friend," observed Doctor Blimber, "has never complain."

"Oh no!" replied the apothecary. "He was not likely to complain."

"You find him greatly better?" said Doctor Blimber.

"Oh! He is greatly better, sir," returned the apothecary.

Paul had begun to speculate, in his own odd way, on the subject that might occupy the apothecary's mind just at that moment ; so musingly had he answered the two questions of Doctor Blimber. But the apothecary

happening to meet his little patient's eyes, as the latter set off on that mental expedition, and coming instantly out of his abstraction with a cheerful smile, Paul smiled in return and abandoned it.

He lay in bed all that day, dozing and dreaming, and looking at Mr. Toots ; but got up on the next, and went down-stairs. Lo and behold, there was something the matter with the great clock ; and a workman on a pair of steps had taken its face off, and was poking instruments into the works by the light of a candle ! This was a great event for Paul, who sat down on the bottom stair, and watched the operation attentively : now and then glancing at the clock face, leaning all askew, against the wall hard by, and feeling a little confused by a suspicion that it was ogling him.

The workman on the steps was very civil ; and as he said, when he observed Paul, "How do you do, sir?" Paul got into conversation with him, and told him he hadn't been quite well lately. The ice being thus broken Paul asked him a multitude of questions about chimes and clocks : as, whether people watched up in the lonely church steeples by night to make them strike, and how the bells were rung when people died, and whether those were different bells from wedding bells, or only sounded dismal in the fancies of the living. Finding that his new acquaintance was not very well informed on the subject of the curfew bell of ancient days, Paul gave him an account of that institution ; and also asked him as a practical man, what he thought about King Alfred's idea of measuring time by the burning of candles ; to which the workman replied, that he thought it would be the ruin of the clock trade if it was to come up again. In fine, Paul looked on, until the clock had quite recovered its familiar aspect, and resumed its sedate inquiry ; when the workman, putting away his tools in a long basket, bade him good day, and went away. Though not before he had whispered something, on the door mat, to the footman, in which there was the phrase "old-fashioned"—for Paul heard it.

What could that old fashion be, that seemed to make the people sorry ! What could it be ?

Having nothing to learn now, he thought of this frequently ; though not so often as he might have done, if he had had fewer things to think of. But he had a great many ; and was always thinking, all day long.

First, there was Florence coming to the party. Florence would see that the boys were fond of him ; and that would make her happy. This was his great theme. Let Florence once be sure that they were gentle and good to him, and that he had become a little favourite among them, and then she would always think of the



PAUL ALSO ASKED HIM, AS A PRACTICAL MAN, WHAT HE THOUGHT ABOUT KING ALFRED'S IDEA OF MEASURING TIME BY THE BURNING OF CANDLES.

—Dombey and Son, Vol. Eleven, page 519.

time he had passed there, without being very sorry. Florence might be all the happier too for that, perhaps, when he came back.

When he came back ! Fifty times a day, his noiseless little feet went up the stairs to his own room, as he collected every book, and scrap, and trifle that belonged to him, and put them all together there, down to the minutest thing, for taking home ! There was no shade of coming back on little Paul ; no preparation for it, or other reference to it, grew out of anything he thought or did, except this slight one in connexion with his sister. On the contrary, he had to think of everything familiar to him, in his contemplative moods and in his wanderings about the house, as being to be parted with ; and hence the many things he had to think of, all day long.

He had to peep into those rooms up-stairs, and think how solitary they would be when he was gone, and wonder through how many silent days, weeks, months, and years, they would continue just as grave and undisturbed. He had to think—would any other child (old-fashioned, like himself) stray there at any time, to whom the same grotesque distortions of pattern and furniture would manifest themselves ; and would anybody tell that boy of little Dombey, who had been there once.

He had to think of a portrait on the stairs, which always looked earnestly after him as he went away, eyeing it over his shoulder ; and which, when he passed it in the company of any one, still seemed to gaze at him, and not at his companion. He had much to think of, in association with a print that hung up in another place, where, in the centre of a wondering group, one figure that he knew, a figure with a light about its head—benignant, mild, and merciful—stood pointing upward.

At his own bedroom window, there were crowds of thoughts that mixed with these, and came on, one upon another, one upon another, like the rolling waves. Where those wild birds lived, that were always hovering out at sea in troubled weather ; where the clouds rose, and first began ; whence the wind issued on its rushing flight, and where it stopped ; whether the spot where he and Florence had so often sat, and watched, and talked about these things, could ever be exactly as it used to be without them ; whether it could ever be the same to Florence, if he were in some distant place, and she were sitting there alone.

He had to think, too, of Mr. Toots, and Mr. Feeder, B.A. ; of all the boys ; and of Doctor Blimber, Mrs. Blimber, and Miss Blimber ; of home, and of his aunt and Miss Tox ; of his father, Dombey and Son, Walter with the poor old uncle who had got the money he wanted.

and that gruff-voiced captain with the iron hand. Besides all this, he had a number of little visits to pay, in the course of the day; to the school-room, to Doctor Blimber's study, to Mrs. Blimber's private apartment, to Miss Blimber's, and to the dog. For he was free of the whole house now, to range it as he chose; and in his desire to part with everybody on affectionate terms, he attended, in his way, to them all. Sometimes he found places in books for Briggs, who was always losing them; sometimes he looked up words in dictionaries for other young gentlemen who were in extremity; sometimes he held skeins of silk for Mrs. Blimber to wind; sometimes he put Cornelia's desk to rights; sometimes he would even creep into the doctor's study, and sitting on the carpet near his learned feet, turn the globes softly, and go round the world, or take a flight among the far-off stars.

In those days immediately before the holidays, in short, when the other young gentlemen were labouring for dear life through a general resumption of the studies of the whole half-year, Paul was such a privileged pupil as had never been seen in that house before. He could hardly believe it himself; but his liberty lasted from hour to hour, and from day to day; and little Dombey was caressed by every one. Doctor Blimber was so particular about him, that he requested Johnson to retire from the dinner-table one day, for having thoughtlessly spoken to him as "poor little Dombey;" which Paul thought rather hard and severe, though he had flushed at the moment, and wondered why Johnson should pity him. It was the more questionable justice, Paul thought, in the doctor, from his having certainly overheard that great authority give his assent on the previous evening, to the proposition (stated by Mrs. Blimber) that poor dear little Dombey was more old-fashioned than ever. And now it was that Paul began to think it must surely be old-fashioned to be very thin, and light, and easily tired, and soon disposed to lie down anywhere and rest; for he couldn't help feeling that these were more and more his habits every day.

At last the party-day arrived; and Doctor Blimber said at breakfast, "Gentlemen, we will resume our studies on the twenty-fifth of next month." Mr. Toots immediately threw off his allegiance, and put on his ring; and mentioning the doctor in casual conversation shortly afterwards, spoke of him as "Blimber!" This act of freedom inspired the older pupils with admiration and envy; but the younger spirits were appalled, and seemed to marvel that no beam fell down and crushed him.

Not the least allusion was made to the ceremonies of the evening, either at breakfast or at dinner; but there

was a bustle in the house all day, and in the course of his perambulations, Paul made acquaintance with various strange benches and candlesticks, and met a harp in a green great-coat standing on the landing outside the drawing-room door. There was something queer, too, about Mrs. Blimber's head at dinner-time, as if she had screwed her hair up too tight; and though Miss Blimber showed a graceful bunch of plaited hair on each temple, she seemed to have her own little curls in paper underneath, and in a play-bill too; for Paul read "Theatre Royal" over one of her sparkling spectacles, and "Brighton" over the other.

There was a grand array of white waistcoats and cravats in the young gentlemen's bedrooms as evening approached; and such a smell of singed hair, that Doctor Blimber sent up the footman with his compliments, and wished to know if the house was on fire. But it was only the hair-dresser curling the young gentlemen, and overheating his tongs in the ardour of business.

When Paul was dressed—which was very soon done, for he felt unwell and drowsy, and was not able to stand about it very long—he went down into the drawing-room; where he found Doctor Blimber pacing up and down the room full dressed, but with a dignified and unconcerned demeanour, as if he thought it barely possible that one or two people might drop in by and bye. Shortly afterwards, Mrs. Blimber appeared, looking lovely, Paul thought; and attired in such a number of skirts that it was quite an excursion to walk round her. Miss Blimber came down soon after her mama; a little squeezed in appearance, but very charming.

Mr. Toots and Mr. Feeder were the next arrivals. Each of these gentlemen brought his hat in his hand, as if he lived somewhere else; and when they were announced by the butler, Doctor Blimber said, "Aye, aye, aye! God bless my soul!" and seemed extremely glad to see them. Mr. Toots was one blaze of jewellery and buttons; and he felt the circumstance so strongly, that when he had shaken hands with the doctor, and had bowed to Mrs. Blimber and Miss Blimber, he took Paul aside, and said, "What do you think of this, Dombey!"

But notwithstanding this modest confidence in himself, Mr. Toots appeared to be involved in a good deal of uncertainty whether, on the whole, it was judicious to button the bottom button of his waistcoat, and whether, on a calm revision of all the circumstances, it was best to wear his wristbands turned up or turned down. Observing that Mr. Feeder's were turned up, Mr. Toots turned his up; but the wristbands of the next arrival being turned down, Mr. Toots turned his down. The differences in point of waistcoat-buttoning, not only at the bottom, but

at the top too, became so numerous and complicated as the arrivals thickened, that Mr. Toots was continually fingering that article of dress, as if he were performing on some instrument; and appeared to find the incessant execution it demanded, quite bewildering.

All the young gentlemen tightly cravatted, curled, and pumped, and with their best hats in their hands, having been at different times announced and introduced, Mr. Baps, the dancing-master, came, accompanied by Mrs. Baps, to whom Mrs. Blimber was extremely kind and condescending. Mr. Baps was a very grave gentleman, with a slow and measured manner of speaking; and before he had stood under the lamp five minutes, he began to talk to Toots (who had been silently comparing pumps with him) about what you were to do with your raw materials when they came into your ports in return for your drain of gold. Mr. Toots, to whom the question seemed perplexing, suggested "Cook 'em." But Mr. Baps did not appear to think that would do.

Paul now slipped away from the cushioned corner of a sofa, which had been his post of observation, and went down-stairs into the tea-room to be ready for Florence, whom he had not seen for nearly a fortnight, as he had remained at Doctor Blimber's on the previous Saturday and Sunday, lest he should take cold. Presently she came: looking so beautiful in her simple ball dress, with her fresh flowers in her hand, that when she knelt down on the ground to take Paul round the neck and kiss him (for there was no one there but his friend and another young woman waiting to serve out the tea), he could hardly make up his mind to let her go again or take away her bright and loving eyes from his face.

"But what is the matter, Floy?" asked Paul, almost sure that he saw a tear there.

"Nothing, darling, nothing," returned Florence.

Paul touched her cheek gently with his finger—and it was a tear! "Why, Floy!" said he.

"We'll go home together, and I'll nurse you, love," said Florence.

"Nurse me!" echoed Paul.

Paul couldn't understand what that had to do with it, nor why the two young women looked on so seriously, nor why Florence turned away her face for a moment, and then turned it back, lighted up again with smiles.

"Floy," said Paul, holding a ringlet of her dark hair in his hand. "Tell me, dear. Do you think I have grown old-fashioned?"

His sister laughed, and fondled him, and told him "No."

"Because I know they say so," returned Paul, "and I want to know what they mean, Floy."

But a loud double knock coming at the door, and Florence hurrying to the table, there was no more said between them. Paul wondered again when he saw his friend whisper to Florence, as if she were comforting her; but a new arrival put that out of his head speedily.

It was Sir Barnet Skettles, Lady Skettles, and Master Skettles. Master Skettles was to be a new boy after the vacation, and Fame had been busy, in Mr. Feeder's room, with his father, who was in the House of Commons, and of whom Mr. Feeder had said that when he *did* catch the Speaker's eye (which he had been expected to do for three or four years), it was anticipated that he would rather touch up the Radicals.

"And what room is this now, for instance?" said Lady Skettles to Paul's friend, 'Melia.

"Doctor Blimber's study, ma'am," was the reply.

Lady Skettles took a panoramic survey of it through her glass, and said to Sir Barnet Skettles, with a nod of approval, "Very good." Sir Barnet assented, but Master Skettles looked suspicious and doubtful.

"And this little creature, now," said Lady Skettles, turning to Paul. "Is he one of the—"

"Young gentlemen, ma'am; yes, ma'am," said Paul's friend.

"And what is your name, my pale child?" said Lady Skettles.

"Dombey," answered Paul.

Sir Barnet Skettles immediately interposed, and said that he had had the honour of meeting Paul's father at a public dinner, and that he hoped he was very well. Then Paul heard him say to Lady Skettles, "City—very rich—most respectable—doctor mentioned it." And then he said to Paul, "Will you tell your good papa that Sir Barnet Skettles rejoiced to hear that he was very well, and sent him his best compliments?"

"Yes, sir," answered Paul.

"That is my brave boy," said Sir Barnet Skettles. "Barnet," to Master Skettles, who was revenging himself for the studies to come, on the plum-cake, "this is a young gentleman you ought to know. This is a young gentleman you *may* know, Barnet," said Sir Barnet Skettles, with an emphasis on the permission.

"What eyes! What hair! What a lovely face!" exclaimed Lady Skettles softly, as she looked at Florence through her glass.

"My sister," said Paul, presenting her.

The satisfaction of the Skettleses was now complete. And as Lady Skettles had conceived, at first sight, a liking for Paul, they all went up-stairs together: Sir Barnet Skettles taking care of Florence, and young Barnet following.

Young Barnet did not remain long in the back-ground after they had reached the drawing-room, for Doctor Blimber had him out in no time dancing with Florence. He did not appear to Paul to be particularly happy, or particularly anything but sulky, or to care much what he was about; but as Paul heard Lady Skettles say to Mrs. Blimber, while she beat time with her fan, that her dear boy was evidently smitten to death by that angel of a child, Miss Dombey, it would seem that Skettles junior was in a state of bliss without showing it.

Little Paul thought it a singular coincidence that nobody had occupied his place among the pillows; and that when he came into the room again, they should all make way for him to go back to it, remembering it was his. Nobody stood before him either, when they observed that he liked to see Florence dancing, but they left the space in front quite clear, so that he might follow her with his eyes. They were so kind, too, even the strangers, of whom there were soon a great many, that they came and spoke to him every now and then, and asked him how he was, and if his head ached, and whether he was tired. He was very much obliged to them for all their kindness and attention, and reclining propped up in his corner, with Mrs. Blimber and Lady Skettles on the same sofa, and Florence coming and sitting by his side as soon as every dance was ended, he looked on very happily indeed.

Florence would have sat by him all night, and would not have danced at all of her own accord, but Paul made her, by telling her how much it pleased him. And he told her the truth, too; for his small heart swelled, and his face glowed, when he saw how much they all admired her, and how she was the beautiful little rosebud of the room.

From his nest among the pillows, Paul could see and hear almost everything that passed, as if the whole were being done for his amusement. Among other little incidents that he observed, he observed Mr. Baps the dancing-master get into conversation with Sir Barnet Skettles, and very soon ask him, as he had asked Mr. Toots, what you were to do with your raw materials, when they came into your ports in return for your drain of gold—which was such a mystery to Paul that he was quite desirous to know what ought to be done with them. Sir Barnet Skettles had much to say upon the question, and said it; but it did not appear to solve the question, for Mr. Baps retorted, Yes, but supposing Russia stepped in with her tallows; which struck Sir Barnet almost dumb, for he could only shake his head after that, and say, why then you must fall back upon your cottons, he supposed.

Sir Barnet Skettles looked after Mr. Baps when he went to cheer up Mrs. Baps (who, being quite deserted, was pretending to look over the music book of the gentleman who played the harp), as if he thought him a remarkable kind of man ; and shortly afterwards he said so in those words to Doctor Blimber, and inquired if he might take the liberty of asking who he was, and whether he had ever been in the Board of Trade. Doctor Blimber answered no, he believed not ; and that in fact he was a professor of—

“Of something connected with statistics, I’ll swear?” observed Sir Barnet Skettles.

“Why no, Sir Barnet,” replied Doctor Blimber, rubbing his chin. “No, not exactly.”

“Figures of some sort I would venture a bet,” said Sir Barnet Skettles.

“Why yes,” said Doctor Blimber, “yes, but not of that sort. Mr. Baps is a very worthy sort of man, Sir Barnet, and—in fact he’s our professor of dancing.”

Paul was amazed to see that this piece of information quite altered Sir Barnet Skettles’ opinion of Mr. Baps, and that Sir Barnet flew into a perfect rage, and glowered at Mr. Baps over on the other side of the room. He even went so far as to D Mr. Baps to Lady Skettles, in telling her what had happened, and to say that it was like his most con-sum-mate and con-foun-ded impudence.

There was another thing that Paul observed. Mr. Feeder, after imbibing several custard-cups of negus, began to enjoy himself. The dancing in general was ceremonious, and the music rather solemn—a little like church music in fact : but after the custard-cups, Mr. Feeder told Mr. Toots that he was going to throw a little spirit into the thing. After that, Mr. Feeder not only began to dance as if he meant dancing and nothing else, but secretly to stimulate the music to perform wild tunes. Further, he became particular in his attentions to the ladies ; and dancing with Miss Blimber, whispered to her—whispered to her l—though not so softly but that Paul heard him say this remarkable poetry,

“Had I a heart for falsehood framed,
I ne’er could injure YOU !”

This, Paul heard him repeat to four young ladies in succession. Well might Mr. Feeder say to Mr. Toots, that he was afraid he should be the worse for it to-morrow !

Mrs. Blimber was a little alarmed by this—comparatively speaking—profligate behaviour ; and especially by the alteration in the character of the music, which,

beginning to comprehend low melodies that were popular in the streets, might not unnaturally be supposed to give offence to Lady Skettles. But Lady Skettles was so very kind as to beg Mrs. Blimber not to mention it; and to receive her explanation that Mr. Feeder's spirits sometimes betrayed him into excesses on these occasions, with the greatest courtesy and politeness; observing, that he seemed a very nice sort of person for his situation, and that she particularly liked the unassuming style of his hair—which (as already hinted) was about a quarter of an inch long.

Once, when there was a pause in the dancing, Lady Skettles told Paul that he seemed very fond of music. Paul replied, that he was; and if she was, too, she ought to hear his sister Florence sing. Lady Skettles presently discovered that she was dying with anxiety to have that gratification; and though Florence was at first very much frightened at being asked to sing before so many people, and begged earnestly to be excused, yet, on Paul calling her to him, and saying, "Do, Floy! Please! For me, my dear!" she went straight to the piano, and began. When they all drew a little away, that Paul might see her; and when he saw her sitting there alone, so young, and good, and beautiful, and kind to him; and heard her thrilling voice, so natural and sweet, and such a golden link between him and all his life's love and happiness, rising out of the silence; he turned his face away, and hid his tears. Not, as he told them when they spoke to him, not that the music was too plaintive or too sorrowful, but it was so dear to him.

They all loved Florence! How could they help it? Paul had known beforehand that they must and would; and sitting in his cushioned corner, with calmly folded hands, and one leg loosely doubled under him, few would have thought what triumph and delight expanded his childish bosom while he watched her, or what a sweet tranquillity he felt. Lavish encomiums on "Dombey's sister," reached his ears from all the boys: admiration of the self-possessed and modest little beauty, was on every lip: reports of her intelligence and accomplishments floated past him, constantly; and, as if borne in upon the air of the summer night, there was a half intelligible sentiment diffused around, referring to Florence and himself, and breathing sympathy for both, that soothed and touched him.

He did not know why. For all that the child observed, and felt, and thought, that night—the present and the absent; what was then and what had been—were blended like the colours in the rainbow, or in the plumage of rich birds when the sun is shining on them, or in the softening sky when the same sun is setting.

The many things he had had to think of lately, passed before him in the music ; not as claiming his attention over again, or as likely ever more to occupy it, but as peacefully disposed of and gone. A solitary window, gazed through years ago, looked out upon an ocean, miles and miles away ; upon its waters, fancies, busy with him only yesterday, were hushed and lulled to rest like broken waves. The same mysterious murmur he had wondered at, when lying on his couch upon the beach, he thought he still heard sounding through his sister's song, and through the hum of voices, and the tread of feet, and having some part in the faces flitting by, and even in the heavy gentleness of Mr. Toots, who frequently came up to shake him by the hand. Through the universal kindness he still thought he heard it, speaking to him ; and even his old-fashioned reputation seemed to be allied to it, he knew not how. Thus little Paul sat musing, listening, looking on, and dreaming ; and was very happy.

Until the time arrived for taking leave : and then, indeed, there was a sensation in the party. Sir Barnet Skettles brought up Skettles Junior to shake hands with him, and asked him if he would remember to tell his good Papa, with his best compliments, that he, Sir Barnet Skettles, had said he hoped the two young gentlemen would become intimately acquainted. Lady Skettles kissed him, and parted his hair upon his brow, and held him in her arms ; and even Mrs. Baps—poor Mrs. Baps ! Paul was glad of that—came over from beside the music-book of the gentleman who played the harp, and took leave of him quite as heartily as anybody in the room.

“ Good bye, Doctor Blimber,” said Paul, stretching out his hand.

“ Good bye, my little friend,” returned the doctor.

“ I'm very much obliged to you, sir,” said Paul, looking innocently up into his awful face. “ Ask them to take care of Diogenes, if you please.”

Diogenes was the dog ; who had never in his life received a friend into his confidence, before Paul. The doctor promised that every attention should be paid to Diogenes in Paul's absence, and Paul having again thanked him, and shaken hands with him, bade adieu to Mrs. Blimber and Cornelia with such heartfelt earnestness that Mrs. Blimber forgot from that moment to mention Cicero to Lady Skettles, though she had fully intended it, all the evening. Cornelia taking both Paul's hands in hers, said, “ Dombey, Dombey, you have always been my favourite pupil. God bless you !” And it showed, Paul thought, how easily one might do injustice to a person ; for Miss Blimber meant it—though she *was* a Forcer—and felt it.

A buzz then went round among the young gentlemen, of "Dombey's going!" "Little Dombey's going!" and there was a general move after Paul and Florence down the staircase and into the hall, in which the whole Blimber family were included. Such a circumstance, Mr. Feeder said aloud, as had never happened in the case of any former young gentleman within his experience; but it would be difficult to say if this were sober fact or custard-cups. The servants with the butler at their head, had all an interest in seeing Little Dombey go; and even the weak-eyed young man, taking out his books and trunks to the coach that was to carry him and Florence to Mrs. Pipchin's for the night, melted visibly.

Not even the influence of the softer passion on the young gentlemen—and they all, to a boy, doted on Florence—could restrain them from taking quite a noisy leave of Paul; waving hats after him, pressing downstairs to shake hands with him, crying individually "Dombey, don't forget me!" and indulging in many such ebullitions of feeling, uncommon among those young Chesterfields. Paul whispered Florence, as she wrapped him up before the door was opened; Did she hear them? Would she ever forget it? Was she glad to know it? And a lively delight was in his eyes as he spoke to her.

Once, for a last look, he turned and gazed upon the faces thus addressed to him, surprised to see how shining and how bright, and numerous they were, and how they were all piled and heaped up, as faces are at crowded theatres. They swam before him as he looked, like faces in an agitated glass; and next moment he was in the dark coach outside, holding close to Florence. From that time, whenever he thought of Doctor Blimber's, it came back as he had seen it in this last view, and it never seemed to be a real place again, but always a dream, full of eyes.

This was not quite the last of Doctor Blimber's, however. There was something else. There was Mr. Toots. Who, unexpectedly letting down one of the coach windows, and looking in, said, with a most egregious chuckle, "Is Dombey there?" and immediately put it up again, without waiting for an answer. Nor was this quite the last of Mr. Toots, even; for before the coachman could drive off, he as suddenly let down the other window, and looking in with a precisely similiar chuckle, said in a precisely similiar tone of voice, "Is Dombey there?" and disappeared precisely as before.

How Florence laughed! Paul often remembered it, and laughed himself whenever he did so.

But there was much, soon afterwards—next day, and after that—which Paul could only recollect confusedly

As, why they stayed at Mrs. Pipchin's days and nights, instead of going home ; why he lay in bed, with Florence sitting by his side ; whether that had been his father in the room, or only a tall shadow on the wall ; whether he had heard his doctor say, of some one, that if they had removed him before the occasion on which he had built up fancies, strong in proportion to his own weakness, it was very possible he might have pined away.

He could not even remember whether he had often said to Florence, "Oh Floy, take me home and never leave me !" but he thought he had. He fancied sometimes he had heard himself repeating, "Take me home, Floy ! take me home !"

But he could remember, when he got home, and was carried up the well-remembered stairs, that there had been a rumbling of a coach for many hours together, while he lay upon the seat, with Florence still beside him, and old Mrs. Pipchin sitting opposite. He remembered his old bed too, when they laid him down in it. His aunt, Miss Tox, and Susan : but there was something else, and recent too, that still perplexed him.

"I want to speak to Florence, if you please," he said. "To Florence by herself for a moment !"

She bent down over him, and the others stood away.

"Floy, my pet, wasn't that papa in the hall when they brought me from the coach ?"

"Yes, dear."

"He didn't cry, and go into his room, Floy, did he, when he saw me coming in ?"

Florence shook her head, and pressed her lip against his cheek.

"I'm very glad he didn't cry," said little Paul. "I thought he did. Don't tell them that I asked."

CHAPTER XV.

Amazing Artfulness of Captain Cuttle, and a new Pursuit for Walter Gay.

WALTER could not, for several days, decide what to do in the Barbados business ; and even cherished some faint hope that Mr. Dombey might not have meant what he had said, or that he might change his mind, and tell him he was not to go. But as nothing occurred to give this idea (which was sufficiently improbable in itself) any touch of confirmation, and as time was slipping by, and he had none to lose, he felt that he must act, without hesitating any longer.

Walter's chief difficulty was, how to break the change in his affairs to Uncle Sol, to whom he was sensible it

would be a terrible blow. He had the greater difficulty in dashing Uncle Sol's spirits with such an astounding piece of intelligence, because they had lately recovered very much, and the old man had become so cheerful, that the little back parlour was itself again. Uncle Sol had paid the first appointed portion of the debt to Mr. Dombey, and was hopeful of working his way through the rest; and to cast him down afresh, when he had sprung up so manfully from his troubles, was a very distressing necessity.

Yet it would never do to run away from him. He must know of it beforehand; and how to tell him was the point. As to the question of going or not going, Walter did not consider that he had any power of choice in the matter. Mr. Dombey had truly told him that he was young, and that his uncle's circumstances were not good; and Mr. Dombey had plainly expressed, in the glance with which he had accompanied that reminder, that if he declined to go he might stay at home if he chose, but not in his counting-house. His uncle and he lay under a great obligation to Mr. Dombey, which was of Walter's own soliciting. He might have begun in secret to despair of ever winning that gentleman's favour, and might have thought that he was now and then disposed to put a slight upon him, which was hardly just. But what would have been duty without that, was still duty with it—or Walter thought so—and duty must be done.

When Mr. Dombey had looked at him, and told him he was young, and that his uncle's circumstances were not good, there had been an expression of disdain in his face; a contemptuous and disparaging assumption that he would be quite content to live idly on a reduced old man, which stung the boy's generous soul. Determined to assure Mr. Dombey, in so far as it was possible to give him the assurance without expressing it in words that indeed he mistook his nature, Walter had been anxious to show even more cheerfulness and activity after the West-Indian interview than he had shown before: if that were possible, in one of his quick and zealous disposition. He was too young and inexperienced to think, that possibly this very quality in him was not agreeable to Mr. Dombey, and that it was no stepping-stone to his good opinion to be elastic and hopeful of pleasing under the shadow of his powerful displeasure, whether it were right or wrong. But it may have been—it may have been—that the great man thought himself defied in this new exposition of an honest spirit, and purposed to bring it down.

“Well! at last and at least, Uncle Sol must be told,” thought Walter with a sigh. And as Walter was appre-

hensive that his voice might perhaps quaver a little, and that his countenance might not be quite as hopeful as he could wish it to be, if he told the old man himself, and saw the first effects of his communication on his wrinkled face, he resolved to avail himself of the services of that powerful mediator, Captain Cuttle. Sunday coming round, he set off, therefore, after breakfast, once more to beat up Captain Cuttle's quarters.

It was not unpleasant to remember, on the way thither, that Mrs. MacStinger resorted to a great distance every Sunday morning, to attend the ministry of the Reverend Melchisedech Howler, who, having been one day discharged from the West India Docks on a false suspicion (got up expressly against him by the general enemy) of screwing gimlets into puncheons, and applying his lips to the orifice, had announced the destruction of the world for that day two years, at ten in the morning, and opened a front parlour for the reception of ladies and gentlemen of the Ranting persuasion, upon whom, on the first occasion of their assemblage, the admonitions of the Reverend Melchisedech had produced so powerful an effect, that, in their rapturous performance of a sacred jig, which closed the service, the whole flock broke through into a kitchen below, and disabled a mangle belonging to one of the fold.

This the captain, in a moment of uncommon conviviality, had confided to Walter and his uncle, between the repetitions of lovely Peg, on the night when Brogley the broker was paid out. The captain himself was punctual in his attendance at a church in his own neighbourhood, which hoisted the union jack every Sunday morning; and where he was good enough—the lawful beadle being infirm—to keep an eye upon the boys, over whom he exercised great power, in virtue of his mysterious hook. Knowing the regularity of the captain's habits, Walter made all the haste he could, that he might anticipate his going out; and he made such good speed, that he had the pleasure, on turning into Brig Place, to behold the broad blue coat and waistcoat hanging out of the captain's open window, to air in the sun.

It appeared incredible that the coat and waistcoat could be seen by mortal eyes without the captain; but he certainly was not in them, otherwise his legs—the houses in Brig Place not being lofty—would have obstructed the street door, which was perfectly clear. Quite wondering at this discovery, Walter gave a single knock.

"Stinger," he distinctly heard the captain say, up in his room, as if that were no business of his. Therefore Walter gave two knocks.

"Cuttle," he heard the captain say upon that; and immediately afterwards the captain, in his clean shirt

and braces, with his neckerchief hanging loosely round his throat like a coil of rope, and his glazed hat on, appeared at the window, leaning out over the broad blue coat and waistcoat.

“Wal’r!” cried the captain, looking down upon him in amazement.

“Ay, ay, Captain Cuttle,” returned Walter, “only me.”

“What’s the matter, my lad?” inquired the captain, with great concern, “Gills an’t been and sprung nothing again?”

“No, no,” said Walter. “My uncle’s all right, Captain Cuttle.”

The captain expressed his gratification, and said he would come down below and open the door, which he did.

“Though you’re early, Wal’r,” said the captain, eyeing him still doubtfully, when they got up-tairs.

“Why, the fact is, Captain Cuttle,” said Walter, sitting down, “I was afraid you would have gone out, and I want to benefit by your friendly counsel.”

“So you shall,” said the captain; “What’ll you take?”

“I want to take your opinion, Captain Cuttle,” returned Walter, smiling. “That’s the only thing for me.”

“Come on then,” said the captain. “With a will, my lad!”

Walter related to him what had happened; and the difficulty in which he felt respecting his uncle, and the relief it would be to him if Captain Cuttle, in his kindness, would help him to smooth it away; Captain Cuttle’s infinite consternation and astonishment at he prospect unfolded to him, gradually swallowing that gentleman up, until it left his face quite vacant, and the suit of blue, the glazed hat, and the hook, apparently without an owner.

“You see, Captain Cuttle,” pursued Walter, “for myself, I am young, as Mr. Dombey said, and not to be considered. I am to fight my way through the world, I know; but there are two points I was thinking, as I came along, that I should be very particular about, in respect to my uncle. I don’t mean to say that I deserve to be the pride and delight of his life—you believe me, I know—but I am. Now, don’t you think I am?”

The captain seemed to make an endeavour to rise from the depths of his astonishment, and get back to his face; but the effort being ineffectual, the glazed hat merely nodded with a mute unutterable meaning.

“If I live and have my health,” said Walter, “and I am not afraid of that, still, when I leave England I can

hardly hope to see my uncle again. He is old, Captain Cuttle ; and besides, his life is a life of custom—”

“Steady, Wal’r ! Of a want of custom ?” said the captain, suddenly reappearing.

“Too true,” returned Walter, shaking his head ; “but I meant a life of habit, Captain Cuttle—that sort of custom. And if (as you very truly said, I am sure) he would have died the sooner for the loss of the stock, and all those objects to which he has been accustomed for so many years, don’t you think he might die a little sooner for the loss of—”

“Of his nevy,” interposed the captain. “Right !”

“Well then,” said Walter, trying to speak gaily, “we must do our best to make him believe that the separation is but a temporary one, after all ; but as I know better, or dread that I know better, Captain Cuttle, and as I have so many reasons for regarding him with affection, and duty, and honour, I am afraid I should make but a very poor hand at that, if I tried to persuade him of it. That’s my great reason for wishing you to break it out to him ; and that’s the first point.”

“Keep her off a point or so !” observed the captain, in a contemplative voice.

“What did you say, Captain Cuttle ?” inquired Walter.

“Stand by !” returned the captain, thoughtfully.

Walter paused to ascertain if the captain had any particular information to add to this, but as he said no more, went on.

“Now, the second point, Captain Cuttle. I am sorry to say, I am not a favourite with Mr. Dombey. I have always tried to do my best, and I have always done it ; but he does not like me. He can’t help his likings and dislikings, perhaps. I say nothing of that. I only say that I am certain he does not like me. He does not send me to this post as a good one ; he disdains to represent it as being better than it is ; and I doubt very much if it will ever lead me to advancement in the House—whether it does not, on the contrary, dispose of me for ever, and put me out of the way. Now, we must say nothing of this to my uncle, Captain Cuttle, but must make it out to be as favourable and promising as we can ; and when I tell you what it really is, I only do so, that in case any means should ever arise of lending me a hand, so far off, I may have one friend at home who knows my real situation.”

“Wal’r, my boy,” replied the captain, “in the Proverbs of Solomon you will find the following words, ‘May we never want a friend in need, nor a bottle to give him !’ When found, make a note of.”

Here the captain stretched out his hand to Walter, with

an air of downright good faith that spoke volumes ; at the same time repeating (for he felt proud of the accuracy and pointed application of his quotation), "When found, make a note of."

"Captain Cuttle," said Walter, taking the immense fist extended to him by the captain in both his hands, which it completely filled, "next to my Uncle Sol, I love you. There is no one on earth in whom I can more safely trust, I am sure. As to the mere going away, Captain Cuttle, I don't care for that ; why should I care for that ! If I were free to seek my own fortune—if I were free to go as a common sailor—if I were free to venture on my own account to the farthest end of the world—I would gladly go ! I would have gladly gone, years ago, and taken my chance of what might come of it. But it was against my uncle's wishes, and against the plans he had formed for me, and there was an end of that. But what I feel, Captain Cuttle, is that we have been a little mistaken all along, and that, so far as any improvement in my prospects is concerned, I am no better off now than I was when I first entered Dombey's House—perhaps a little worse, for the House may have been kindly inclined towards me then, and it certainly is not now."

"Turn again, Whittington," muttered the disconsolate captain, after looking at Walter for some time.

"Ay !" replied Walter, laughing, "and turn a great many times, too, Captain Cuttle, I'm afraid, before such fortune as his ever turns up again. Not that I complain," he added, in his lively, animated, energetic way. "I have nothing to complain of. I am provided for. I can live. When I leave my uncle, I leave him to you ; and I can leave him to no one better, Captain Cuttle. I haven't told you all this because I despair, not I ; it's to convince you that I can't pick and choose in Dombey's House, and that where I am sent, there I must go, and what I am offered, that I must take. It's better for my uncle that I should be sent away ; for Mr. Dombey is a valuable friend to him, as he proved himself, you know when, Captain Cuttle ; and I am persuaded he won't be less valuable when he hasn't me there, every day, to awaken his dislike. So hurrah for the West Indies, Captain Cuttle ! How does that tune go that the sailors sing ?

"For the Port of Barbados, boys !
 Cheerily
 Leaving old England behind us, boys !
 Cheerily !

Here the captain roared in chorus

"Oh cheerily, cheerily !
 "Oh cheer—i—ly !"

The last line reaching the quick ears of an ardent skipper not quite sober, who lodged opposite, and who instantly sprung out of bed, threw up his window, and joined in across the street, at the top of his voice, produced a fine effect. When it was impossible to sustain the concluding note any longer, the skipper bellowed forth a terrific "ahoy!" intended in part as a friendly greeting, and in part to show that he was not at all breathless. That done, he shut down his window, and went to bed again.

"And now, Captain Cuttle," said Walter, handing him the blue coat and waistcoat, and bustling very much, "if you'll come and break the news to Uncle Sol (which he ought to have known, days upon days ago, by rights) I'll leave you at the door, you know, and walk about until the afternoon."

The captain, however, scarcely appeared to relish the commission, or to be by any means confident of his power of executing it. He had arranged the future life and adventures of Walter so very differently, and so entirely to his own satisfaction; he had felicitated himself so often on the sagacity and foresight displayed in that arrangement, and had found it so complete and perfect in all its parts; that to suffer it to go to pieces all at once, and even to assist in breaking it up, required a great effort of his resolution. The captain, too, found it difficult to unload his old ideas upon the subject, and to take a perfectly new cargo on board, with that rapidity which the circumstances required, or without jumbling and confounding the two. Consequently, instead of putting on his coat and waistcoat with anything like the impetuosity that could alone have kept pace with Walter's mood, he declined to invest himself with those garments at all at present; and informed Walter that on such a serious matter, he must be allowed to "bite his nails a bit."

"It's an old habit of mine, Wal'r," said the captain, "any time these fifty year. When you see Ned Cuttle bite his rails, Wal'r, then you may know that Ned Cuttle's aground."

Thereupon the captain put his iron hook between his teeth, as if it were a hand; and with an air of wisdom and profundity that was the very concentration and sublimation of all philosophical reflection and grave inquiry, applied himself to the consideration of the subject in its various branches.

"There's a friend of mine," murmured the captain, in an absent manner, "but he's at present coasting round to Whitby, that would deliver such an opinion on this subject, or any other that could be named, as would give Parliament six and beat 'em. Been knocked over-

board that man," said the captain, "twice, and none the worse for it. Was beat in his apprenticeship, for three weeks (off and on), about the head with a ring-bolt. And yet a clearer-minded man don't walk."

In spite of his respect for Captain Cuttle, Walter could not help inwardly rejoicing at the absence of this sage, and devoutly hoping that his limpid intellect might not be brought to bear on his difficulties until they were quite settled.

"If you was to take and show that man the buoy at the Nore," said Captain Cuttle in the same tone, "and ask him his opinion of it, Wal'r, he'd give you an opinion that was no more like that buoy than your uncle's buttons are. There an't a man that walks—certainly not on *two* legs—that can come near him. Not near him!"

"What's his name, Captain Cuttle?" inquired Walter, determined to be interested in the captain's friend.

"His name's Bunsby," said the captain. "But Lord, it might be anything for the matter of that, with such a mind as his!"

The exact idea which the captain attached to this concluding piece of praise, he did not further elucidate; neither did Walter seek to draw it forth. For on his beginning to review, with the vivacity natural to himself and to his situation, the leading points in his own affairs, he soon discovered that the captain had relapsed into his former profound state of mind; and that while he eyed him steadfastly from beneath his bushy eyebrows, he evidently neither saw nor heard him, but remained immersed in cogitation.

In fact, Captain Cuttle was labouring with such great designs, that far from being aground, he soon got off into the deepest of water, and could find no bottom to his penetration. By degrees it became perfectly plain to the captain that there was some mistake here; that it was undoubtedly much more likely to be Walter's mistake than his; that if there were really any West India scheme afoot, it was a very different one from what Walter, who was young and rash, supposed; and could only be some new device for making his fortune with unusual celerity. "Or if there should be any little hitch between 'em," thought the captain, meaning between Walter and Mr. Dombey, "it only wants a word in season from a friend of both parties, to set it right and smooth, and make all taut again." Captain Cuttle's deduction from these considerations was, that as he already enjoyed the pleasure of knowing Mr. Dombey, from having spent a very agreeable half-hour in his company at Brighton (on the morning when they bor-

rowed the money); and that, as a couple of men of the world, who understood each other, and were mutually disposed to make things comfortable, could easily arrange any little difficulty of this sort, and come at the real facts; the friendly thing for him to do would be, without saying anything about it to Walter, at present just to step up to Mr. Dombey's house—say to the servant "Would ye be so good, my lad, as report Cap'en Cuttle here?"—meet Mr. Dombey in a confidential spirit—hook him by the button-hole—talk it over—make it all right—and come away triumphant.

As these reflections presented themselves to the captain's mind, and by slow degrees assumed this shape and form, his visage cleared like a doubtful morning when it gives place to a bright noon. His eyebrows, which had been in the highest degree portentous, smoothed their rugged bristling aspect, and became serene; his eyes, which had been nearly closed in the severity of his mental exercise, opened freely; a smile which had been at first but three specks—one at the right-hand corner of his mouth, and one at the corner of each eye—gradually overspread his whole face, and rippling up into his forehead, lifted the glazed hat: as if that too had been aground with Captain Cuttle, and were now, like him, happily afloat again.

Finally the captain left off biting his nails, and said, "Now, Wal'r, my boy, you may help me on with them slops." By which the captain meant his coat and waistcoat.

Walter little imagined why the captain was so particular in the arrangement of his cravat, as to twist the pendent ends into a sort of pigtail, and pass them through a massive gold ring with a picture of a tomb upon it, and a neat iron railing, and a tree, in memory of some deceased friend. Nor why the captain pulled up his shirt collar to the utmost limits allowed by the Irish linen below, and by so doing decorated himself with a complete pair of blinkers; nor why he changed his shoes, and put on an unparalleled pair of ankle-jacks, which he only wore on extraordinary occasions. The captain being at length attired to his own complete satisfaction, and having glanced at himself from head to foot in a shaving-glass which he removed from a nail for that purpose, took up his knotted stick, and said he was ready.

The captain's walk was more complacent than usual when they got out into the street; but this Walter supposed to be the effect of the ankle-jacks, and took little heed of. Before they had gone very far, they encountered a woman selling flowers; when the captain stopping short, as if struck by a happy idea, made a purchase

of the largest bundle in her basket ; a most glorious nosegay, fan-shaped, some two feet and a half round, and composed of all the jolliest-looking flowers that blow.

Armed with this little token which he designed for Mr. Dombey, Captain Cuttle walked on with Walter until they reached the Instrument-maker's door, before which they both paused.

"You're going in?" said Walter.

"Yes;" returned the captain, who felt that Walter must be got rid of before he proceeded any further, and that he had better time his projected visit somewhat later in the day.

"And you won't forget anything?" said Walter.

"No," returned the captain.

"I'll go upon my walk at once," said Walter, "and then I shall be out of the way, Captain Cuttle."

"Take a good long 'un, my lad!" replied the captain, calling after him. Walter waved his hand in assent, and went his way.

His way was nowhere in particular ; but he thought he would go out into the fields, where he could reflect upon the unknown life before him, and resting under some tree, ponder quietly. He knew no better fields than those near Hampstead, and no better means of getting at them than by passing Mr. Dombey's house.

It was as stately and as dark as ever, when he went by and glanced up at its frowning front. The blinds were all pulled down, but the upper windows stood wide open, and the pleasant air stirring those curtains and waving them to and fro, was the only sign of animation in the whole exterior. Walter walked softly as he passed, and was glad when he had left the house a door or two behind.

He looked back then ; with the interest he had always felt for the place since the adventure of the lost child, years ago ; and looked especially at those upper windows. While he was thus engaged, a chariot drove to the door, and a portly gentleman in black, with a heavy watch-chain, alighted, and went in. When he afterwards remembered this gentleman and his equipage together, Walter had no doubt he was a physician ; and then he wondered who was ill ; but the discovery did not occur to him until he had walked some distance, thinking listlessly of other things.

Though still, of what the house had suggested to him ; for Walter pleased himself with thinking that perhaps the time might come, when the beautiful child who was his old friend and had always been so grateful to him and so glad to see him since, might interest her brother in his behalf and influence his fortunes for the better. He

liked to imagine this—more, at that moment, for the pleasure of imagining her continued remembrance of him, than for any worldly profit he might gain : but another and more sober fancy whispered to him that if he were alive then, he would be beyond the sea and forgotten ; she married, rich, proud, happy. There was no more reason why she should remember him with any interest in such an altered state of things, than any plaything she ever had. No, not so much.

Yet Walter so idealised the pretty child whom he had found wandering in the rough streets, and so identified her with her innocent gratitude of that night and the simplicity and truth of its expression, that he blushed for himself as a libeller when he argued that she could ever grow proud. On the other hand, his meditations were of that fantastic order that it seemed hardly less libellous in him to imagine her grown a woman : to think of her as anything but the same artless, gentle, winning little creature, that she had been in the days of good Mrs. Brown. In a word, Walter found out that to reason with himself about Florence at all, was to become very unreasonable indeed ; and that he could do no better than preserve her image in his mind as something precious, unattainable, unchangeable, and indefinite—indefinite in all but its power of giving him pleasure, and restraining him like an angel's hand from anything unworthy.

It was a long stroll in the fields that Walter took that day, listening to the birds, and the Sunday bells, and the softened murmur of the town—breathing sweet scents ; glancing sometimes at the dim horizon beyond which his voyage and his place of destination lay ; then looking round on the green English grass and the home landscape. But he hardly once thought even of going away, distinctly ; and seemed to put off reflection idly, from hour to hour, and from minute to minute, while he yet went on reflecting all the time.

Walter had left the fields behind him, and was plodding homeward in the same abstracted mood, when he heard a shout from a man, and then a woman's voice calling to him loudly by name. Turning quickly in his surprise, he saw that a hackney-coach, going in the contrary direction, had stopped at no great distance ; that the coachman was looking back from his box, and making signals to him with his whip ; and that a young woman inside was leaning out of the window, and beckoning with immense energy. Running up to this coach, he found that the young woman was Miss Nipper, and that Miss Nipper was in such a flutter as to be almost beside herself.

“Staggs's Gardens, Mr. Walter !” said Miss Nipper ; “if you please, oh do !”

“Eh?” cried Walter: “what is the matter?”

“Oh, Mr. Walter, Staggs’s Gardens, if you please!” said Susan.

“There!” cried the coachman, appealing to Walter, with a sort of exulting despair; “that’s the way the young lady’s been a goin’ on for up’ards of a mortal hour, and me continivally backing out of no thoroughfares, where she *would* drive up. I’ve had a many fares in this coach, first and last, but never such a fare as her.”

“Do you want to go to Staggs’s Gardens, Susan?” inquired Walter.

“Ah! *She* wants to go there! WHERE IS IT?” growled the coachman.

“I don’t know where it is!” exclaimed Susan, wildly. “Mr. Walter, I was there once myself, along with Miss Floy and our poor darling Master Paul, on the very day when you found Miss Floy in the city, for we lost her coming home, Mrs. Richards and me, and a mad bull, and Mrs. Richards’ eldest, and though I went there afterwards, I can’t remember where it is, I think it’s sunk into the ground. Oh, Mr. Walter, don’t desert me. Staggs’s Gardens, if you please! Miss Floy’s darling—all our darlings—little, meek, meek Master Paul! Oh Mr. Walter!”

“Good God!” cried Walter. “Is he very ill?”

“The pretty flower!” cried Susan, wringing her hands, “has took the fancy that he’d like to see his old nurse, and I’ve come to bring her to his bedside, Mrs. Staggs’s of Polly Toodle’s Gardens, some one pray!”

Greatly moved by what he heard, and catching Susan’s earnestness immediately, Walter, now that he understood the nature of her errand, dashed into it with such ardour that the coachman had enough to do to follow closely as he ran before, inquiring here and there and everywhere, the way to Staggs’s Gardens.

There was no such place as Staggs’s Gardens. It had vanished from the earth. Where the old rotten summer-houses once had stood, palaces now reared their heads, and granite columns of gigantic girth opened a vista to the railway world beyond. The miserable waste ground, where the refuse matter had been heaped of yore, was swallowed up and gone; and in its frowsy stead were tiers of warehouses, crammed with rich goods and costly merchandise. The old by-streets now swarmed with passengers and vehicles of every kind: the new streets that had stopped disheartened in the mud and waggon-ruts, formed towns within themselves, originating wholesome comforts and conveniences belonging to themselves, and never tried nor thought of until they sprung into existence. Bridges that had led to nothing, led to villas, gardens, churches, healthy

public walks. The carcasses of houses, and beginnings of new thoroughfares, had started off upon the line at steam's own speed, and shot away into the country in a monster train.

As to the neighbourhood which had hesitated to acknowledge the railroad in its straggling days, that had grown wise and penitent, as any Christian might in such a case, and now boasted of its powerful and prosperous relation. There were railway patterns in its drapers' shops, and railway journals in the windows of its newsmen. There were railway hotels, coffee-houses, lodging-houses, boarding-houses; railway plans, maps, views; wrappers, bottles, sandwich-boxes, and time-tables: railway hackney-coach and cabstands; railway omnibuses, railway streets and buildings, railway hangers-on and parasites, and flatterers out of all calculation. There was even railway time observed in clocks, as if the sun itself had given in. Among the vanquished was the master chimney-sweeper, whilom incredulous at Staggs's Gardens, who now lived in a stuccoed house three stories high, and gave himself out, with golden flourishes upon a varnished board, as contractor for the cleansing of railway chimneys by machinery.

To and from the heart of this great change, all day and night, throbbing currents rushed and returned incessantly like its life's blood. Crowds of people, and mountains of goods, departing and arriving scores upon scores of times in every four-and-twenty hours, produced a fermentation in the place that was always in action. The very houses seemed disposed to pack up and take trips. Wonderful members of Parliament, who, little more than twenty years before, had made themselves merry with the wild railroad theories of engineers, and given them the liveliest rubs in cross-examination, went down into the north with their watches in their hands, and sent on messages before by the electric telegraph to say that they were coming. Night and day the conquering engines rumbled at their distant work, or, advancing smoothly to their journey's end, and gliding like tame dragons into the allotted corners grooved out to the inch for their reception, stood bubbling and trembling there, making the walls quake, as if they were dilating with the secret knowledge of great powers yet unsuspected in them, and strong purposes not yet achieved.

But Staggs's Gardens had been cut up root and branch. Oh woe the day! when "not a rood of English ground"—laid out in Staggs's Gardens—is secure!

At last, after much fruitless inquiry, Walter, followed by the coach and Susan, found a man who had once resided in that vanished land, and who was no

other than the master sweep before referred to, grown stout, and knocking a double knock at his own door. He knewed Toodle, he said, well. Belonged to the Railroad, didn't he?"

"Yes, sir, yes!" cried Susan Nipper from the coach window.

Where did he live now? hastily inquired Walter.

He lived in the company's own buildings, second turning to the right, down the yard, cross over, and take the second on the right again. It was number eleven; they couldn't mistake it; but if they did, they had only to ask for Toodle, Engine Fireman, and any one would show them which was his house. At this unexpected stroke of success, Susan Nipper dismounted from the coach with all speed, took Walter's arm, and set off at a breathless pace on foot; leaving the coach there to await their return.

"Has the little boy been long ill, Susan?" inquired Walter, as they hurried on.

"Ailing for a deal of time, but no one knew how much," said Susan; adding, with excessive sharpness, "Oh, them Blimbers!"

"Blimbers?" echoed Walter.

"I couldn't forgive myself at such a time as this, Mr. Walter," said Susan, "and when there's so much serious distress to think about, if I rested hard on any one, especially on them that little darling Paul speaks well of, but I *may* wish that the family was set to work in a stony soil to make new roads, and that Miss Blimber went in front, and had the pickaxe!"

Miss Nipper then took breath, and went on faster than before, as if this extraordinary aspiration had relieved her. Walter, who had by this time no breath of his own to spare, hurried along without asking any more questions; and they soon, in their impatience, burst in at a little door and came into a clean parlour full of children.

"Where's Mrs. Richards!" exclaimed Susan Nipper, looking round. "Oh Mrs. Richards, Mrs. Richards, come along with me, my dear creetur!"

"Why, if it ain't Susan!" cried Polly rising with her honest face and motherly figure from among the group, in great surprise.

"Yes, Mrs. Richards, it's me," said Susan, "and I wish it wasn't, though I may not seem to datter when I say so, but little Master Paul is very ill, and told his Pa to-day that he would like to see the face of his old nurse, and him and Miss Floy hope you'll come along with me—and Mr. Walter, Mrs. Richards—forgetting what is past, and do a kindness to the sweet dear that is withering away. Oh, Mrs. Richards, withering away!" Susan Nipper crying, Polly shed tears to see her, and

to hear what she had said ; and all the children gathered round (including numbers of new babies) ; and Mr. Toodle who had just come home from Birmingham, and was eating his dinner out of a basin, laid down his knife and fork, and put on his wife's bonnet and shawl for her, which were hanging up behind the door ; then tapped her on the back ; and said with more fatherly feeling than eloquence, " Polly ! cut away ! "

So they got back to the coach, long before the coachman expected them ; and Walter putting Susan and Mrs. Richards inside, took his seat on the box himself that there might be no more mistakes, and deposited them safely in the hall of Mr. Dombey's house—where, by the bye, he saw a mighty nosegay lying, which reminded him of the one Captain Cuttle had purchased in his company that morning. He would have lingered to know more of the young invalid, or waited any length of time to see if he could render the least service ; but painfully sensible that such conduct would be looked upon by Mr. Dombey as presumptuous and forward, he turned slowly, sadly, anxiously, away.

He had not gone five minutes' walk from the door, when a man came running after him, and begged him to return. Walter retraced his steps as quickly as he could, and entered the gloomy house with a sorrowful foreboding.

CHAPTER XVI.

What the Waves were always saying.

PAUL had never risen from his little bed. He lay there, listening to the noises in the street, quite tranquilly ; not caring much how time went, but watching it and watching everything about him with observing eyes.

When the sunbeams struck into his room through the rustling blinds, and quivered on the opposite wall like golden water, he knew that evening was coming on, and that the sky was red and beautiful. As the reflection died away, and a gloom went creeping up the wall, he watched it deepen, deepen, deepen, into night. Then he thought how the long streets were dotted with lamps, and how the peaceful stars were shining overhead. His fancy had a strange tendency to wander to the river, which he knew was flowing through the great city : and now he thought how black it was, and how deep it would look, reflecting the hosts of stars—and more than all, how steadily it rolled away to meet the sea.

As it grew later in the night, and footsteps in the street became so rare that he could hear them coming,

count them as they passed, and lose them in the hollow distance, he would lie and watch the many-coloured ring about the candle and wait patiently for day. His only trouble was, the swift and rapid river. He felt forced, sometimes, to try to stop it—to stem it with his childish hands—or choke its way with sand—and when he saw it coming on, resistless, he cried out! But a word from Florence, who was always at his side, restored him to himself; and leaning his poor head upon her breast, he told Floy of his dream, and smiled.

When day began to dawn again, he watched for the sun; and when its cheerful light began to sparkle in the room, he pictured to himself—pictured! he saw—the high church towers rising up into the morning sky, the town reviving, waking, starting, into life once more, the river, glistening as it rolled (but rolling fast as ever), and the country bright with dew. Familiar sounds and cries came by degrees into the street below; the servants in the house were roused and busy; faces looked in at the door, and voices asked his attendants softly how he was. Paul always answered for himself, “I am better. I am a great deal better, thank you! Tell papa so!”

By little and little, he got tired of the bustle of the day, the noise of carriages and carts, and people passing and re-passing; and would fall asleep, or be troubled with a restless and uneasy sense again—the child could hardly tell whether this were in his sleeping or his waking moments—of that rushing river. “Why, will it never stop, Floy?” he would sometimes ask her. “It is bearing me away, I think!”

But Floy could always soothe and reassure him; and it was his daily delight to make her lay her head down on his pillow, and take some rest.

“You are always watching me, Floy. Let me watch *you*, now!” They would prop him up with cushions in a corner of his bed, and there he would recline the while she lay beside him; bending forward oftentimes to kiss her, and whispering to those who were near that she was tired, and how she had sat up so many nights beside him.

Thus, the flush of the day, in its heat and light, would gradually decline; and again the golden water would be dancing on the wall.

He was visited by as many as three grave doctors—they used to assemble down-stairs, and come up together—and the room was so quiet, and Paul was so observant of them (though he never asked of anybody what they said), that he even knew the difference in the sound of their watches. But his interest centred in Sir Parker Peps, who always took his seat on the side of the bed.

For Paul had heard them say long ago, that that gentleman had been with his mamma when she clasped Florence in her arms, and died. And he could not forget it, now. He liked him for it. He was not afraid.

The people round him changed as unaccountably as on that first night at Doctor Blimber's—except Florence; Florence never changed—and what had been Sir Parker Peps, was now his father, sitting with his head upon his hand. Old Mrs. Pipchin dozing in an easy chair, often changed to Miss Tox, or his aunt; and Paul was quite content to shut his eyes again, and see what happened next without emotion. But this figure with its head upon its hand returned so often, and remained so long, and sat so still and solemn, never speaking, never being spoken to, and rarely lifting up its face, that Paul began to wonder languidly, if it were real; and in the night-time saw it sitting there, with fear.

“Floy!” he said. “What *is* that?”

“Where, dearest?”

“There! at the bottom of the bed.”

“There's nothing there, except papa!”

The figure lifted up its head, and rose, and coming to the bedside, said: “My own boy! Don't you know me?”

Paul looked it in the face, and thought, was this his father? But the face, so altered to his thinking, thrilled while he gazed, as if it were in pain; and before he could reach out both his hands to take it between them, and draw it towards him, the figure turned away quickly from the little bed, and went out at the door.

Paul looked at Florence with a fluttering heart, but he knew what she was going to say, and stopped her with his face against her lips. The next time he observed the figure sitting at the bottom of the bed, he called to it.

“Don't be so sorry for me, dear papa! Indeed I am quite happy!”

His father coming, and bending down to him—which he did quickly, and without first pausing by the bedside—Paul held him round the neck, and repeated those words to him several times, and very earnestly; and Paul never saw him in his room again at any time, whether it were day or night, but he called out, “Don't be so sorry for me! Indeed I'm quite happy!” This was the beginning of his always saying in the morning that he was a great deal better, and that they were to tell his father so.

How many times the golden water danced upon the wall; how many nights the dark, dark river rolled towards the sea in spite of him; Paul never counted, never sought to know. If their kindness or his sense of

it, could have increased, they were more kind, and he more grateful every day; but whether they were many days or few, appeared of little moment now to the gentle boy.

One night he had been thinking of his mother, and her picture in the drawing-room down-stairs, and had thought she must have loved sweet Florence better than his father did, to have held her in her arms when she felt that she was dying—for even he, her brother, who had such dear love for her, could have no greater wish than that. The train of thought suggested to him to inquire if he had ever seen his mother; for he could not remember whether they had told him yes or no, the river running very fast, and confusing his mind.

“Floy, did I ever see mama?”

“No, darling, why?”

“Did I never see any kind face, like mama’s, looking at me when I was a baby, Floy?”

He asked, incredulously, as if he had some vision of a face before him.

“Oh yes, dear!”

“Whose, Floy?”

“Your old nurse’s. Often.”

“And where is my old nurse!” said Paul. “Is she dead too? Floy, are we *all* dead, except you?”

There was a hurry in the room for an instant—longer, perhaps; but it seemed no more—then all was still again; and Florence, with her face quite colourless, but smiling, held his head upon her arm. Her arm trembled very much.

“Show me that old nurse, Floy, if you please!”

“She is not here, darling. She shall come to-morrow.”

“Thank you, Floy!”

Paul closed his eyes with those words, and fell asleep. When he awoke the sun was high, and the broad day was clear and warm. He lay a little, looking at the windows, which were open, and the curtains rustling in the air, and waving to and fro: then he said, “Floy, is it to-morrow? Is she come?”

Some one seemed to go in quest of her. Perhaps it was Susan. Paul thought he heard her telling him when he had closed his eyes again, that she would soon be back; but he did not open them to see. She kept her word—perhaps she had never been away—but the next thing that happened was a noise of footsteps on the stairs, and then Paul woke—woke mind and body—and sat upright in his bed. He saw them now about him. There was no grey mist before them, as there had been sometimes in the night. He knew them every one, and called them by their names.

“And who is this? Is this my old nurse?” said the child, regarding with a radiant smile, a figure coming in.

Yes, yes. No other stranger would have shed those tears at sight of him, and called him her dear boy, her pretty boy, her own poor blighted child. No other woman would have stooped down by his bed, and taken up his wasted hand, and put it to her lips and breast, as one who had some right to fondle it. No other woman would have so forgotten everybody there but him and Floy, and been so full of tenderness and pity.

“Floy this is a kind good face!” said Paul. “I am glad to see it again. Don’t go away, old nurse! Stay here!”

His senses were all quickened, and he heard a name he knew.

“Who was that, who said ‘Walter?’” he asked, looking round. “Some one said Walter. Is he here? I should like to see him very much.”

Nobody replied directly; but his father soon said to Susan, “Call him back, then: let him come up!” After a short pause of expectation, during which he looked with smiling interest and wonder on his nurse, and saw that she had not forgotten Floy, Walter was brought into the room. His open face and manner, and his cheerful eyes, had always made him a favourite with Paul; and when Paul saw him, he stretched out his hand, and said, “Good-bye!”

“Good-bye, my child!” cried Mrs. Pipchin, hurrying to his bed’s head. “Not good-bye?”

For an instant Paul looked at her with the wistful face with which he had so often gazed upon her in his corner by the fire. “Ah yes,” he said, placidly, “good-bye! Walter dear, good-bye!”—turning his head to where he stood, and putting out his hand again. “Where is papa?”

He felt his father’s breath upon his cheek, before the words had parted from his lips.

“Remember Walter, dear papa,” he whispered, looking in his face. “Remember Walter. I was fond of Walter!” The feeble hand waved in the air, as if it cried “good-bye!” to Walter once again.

“Now lay me down,” he said, “and Floy, come close to me and let me see you!”

Sister and brother wound their arms around each other, and the golden light came streaming in, and fell upon them locked together.

“How fast the river runs, between its green banks and the rushes, Floy! But it’s very near the sea. I hear the waves! They always said so!”

Presently he told her that the motion of the boat upon the stream was lulling him to rest. How green the banks were now, how bright the flowers growing on them, and how tall the rushes! Now the boat was out at sea, but gliding smoothly on. And now there was a shore before him. Who stood on the bank!—

He put his hands together, as he had been used to do at his prayers. He did not remove his arms to do it; but they saw him fold them so, behind her neck.

“Mama is like you, Floy. I know her by the face! But tell them that the print upon the stairs at school is not divine enough. The light about the head is shining on me as I go!”

The golden ripple on the wall came back again, and nothing else stirred in the room. The old, old fashion! The fashion that came in with our first garments, and will last unchanged until our race has run its course, and the wide firmament is rolled up like a scroll. The old, old fashion—Death!

Oh thank God, all who see it, for that older fashion yet, of Immortality! And look upon us, angels of young children, with regards not quite estranged, when the swift river bears us to the ocean!

CHAPTER XVII.

Captain Cuttle does a little Business for the Young People.

CAPTAIN CUTTLE, in the exercise of that surprising talent for deep-laid and unfathomable scheming, with which (as is not unusual in men of transparent simplicity) he sincerely believed himself to be endowed by nature, had gone to Mr. Dombey's house on the eventful Sunday, winking all the way as a vent for his superfluous sagacity, and had presented himself in the full lustre of the ankle-jacks before the eyes of Towlinson. Hearing from that individual, to his great concern, of the impending calamity, Captain Cuttle, in his delicacy, sheered off again confounded; merely handing in the nosegay as a small mark of his solicitude, and leaving his respectful compliments for the family in general, which he accompanied with an expression of his hope that they would lay their heads well to the wind under existing circumstances, and a friendly intimation that he would “look up again” to-morrow.

The captain's compliments were never heard of any more. The captain's nosegay, after lying in the hall all night, was swept into the dust-binn next morning; and the captain's sly arrangement, involved in one catastrophe with greater hopes and loftier designs, was crushed to

pieces. So, when an avalanche bears down a mountain-forest, twigs and bushes suffer with the trees, and all perish together.

When Walter returned home on the Sunday evening from his long walk, and its memorable close, he was too much occupied at first by the tidings he had to give them, and by the emotions naturally awakened in his breast by the scene through which he had passed, to observe either that his uncle was evidently unacquainted with the intelligence the captain had undertaken to impart, or that the captain made signals with his hook, warning him to avoid the subject. Not that the captain's signals were calculated to have proved very comprehensible, however attentively observed; for, like those Chinese sages who are said in their conferences to write certain learned words in the air that are wholly impossible of pronunciation, the captain made such waves and flourishes as nobody without a previous knowledge of his mystery, would have been at all likely to understand.

Captain Cuttle, however, becoming cognisant of what had happened, relinquished these attempts, as he perceived the slender chance that now existed of his being able to obtain a little easy chat with Mr. Dombey before the period of Walter's departure. But in admitting to himself, with a disappointed and crest-fallen countenance, that Sol Gills must be told, and that Walter must go—taking the case for the present as he found it, and not having it enlightened or improved before hand by the knowing management of a friend—the captain still felt an unabated confidence that he, Ned Cuttle, was the man for Mr. Dombey; and that, to set Walter's fortunes quite square, nothing was wanted but that they two should come together. For the captain never could forget how well he and Mr. Dombey had got on at Brighton; with what nicety each of them had put in a word when it was wanted; how exactly they had taken one another's measure; nor how Ned Cuttle had pointed out that resource in the first extremity, and had brought the interview to the desired termination. On all these grounds the captain soothed himself with thinking that though Ned Cuttle was forced by the pressure of events to "stand by" almost useless for the present, Ned would fetch up with a wet sail in good time, and carry all before him.

Under the influence of this good-natured delusion, Captain Cuttle even went so far as to revolve in his own bosom, while he sat looking at Walter and listening with a tear on his shirt-collar to what he related, whether it might not be at once genteel and politic to give Mr. Dombey a verbal invitation, whenever they should meet, to come and cut his mutton in Brig Place on some day

of his own naming, and enter on the question of his young friend's prospects over a social glass. But the uncertain temper of Mrs. MacStinger, and the possibility of her setting up her rest in the passage during such an entertainment, and there delivering some homily of an uncomplimentary nature, operated as a check on the captain's hospitable thoughts, and rendered him timid of giving them encouragement.

One fact was quite clear to the captain, as Walter, sitting thoughtfully over his untasted dinner, dwelt on all that had happened; namely, that however Walter's modesty might stand in the way of his perceiving it himself, he was, as one might say, a member of Mr. Dombey's family. He had been, in his own person, connected with the incident he so pathetically described; he had been by name remembered and commended in close association with it; and his fortunes must have a particular interest in his employer's eyes. If the captain had any lurking doubt whatever of his own conclusions, he had not the least doubt that they were good conclusions for the peace of mind of the Instrument-maker. Therefore he availed himself of so favourable a moment for breaking the West Indian intelligence to his old friend, as a piece of extraordinary preferment; declaring that for his part he would freely give a hundred thousand pounds (if he had it) for Walter's gain in the long-run, and that he had no doubt such an investment would yield a handsome premium.

Solomon Gills was at first stunned by the communication, which fell upon the little back parlour like a thunderbolt, and tore up the hearth savagely. But the captain flashed such golden prospects before his dim sight: hinted so mysteriously at Whittingtonian consequences: laid such emphasis on what Walter had just now told them: and appealed to it so confidently as a corroboration of his predictions, and a great advance towards the realization of the romantic legend of Lovely Peg: that he bewildered the old man. Walter for his part, feigned to be so full of hope and ardour, and so sure of coming home again soon, and backed up the captain with such expressive shakings of his head and rubbings of his hands, that Solomon, looking first at him and then at Captain Cuttle, began to think he ought to be transported with joy.

"But I'm behind the time, you understand," he observed in apology, passing his hand nervously down the whole row of bright buttons on his coat, and then up again, as if they were beads and he were telling them twice over: "and I would rather have my dear boy here. It's an old-fashioned notion, I dare say. He was always fond of the sea. He's"—and he looked wistfully at Walter—"he's glad to go."

"Uncle Sol!" cried Walter, quickly, "if you say that, I *won't* go. No, Captain Cuttle, I won't. If my uncle thinks I could be glad to leave him, though I am going to be made Governor of all the Islands in the West Indies, that's enough. I'm a fixture."

"Wal'r, my lad," said the captain. "Steady! Sol Gills, take an observation of your nevy."

Following with his eyes the majestic action of the captain's hook, the old man looked at Walter.

"Here is a certain craft," said the captain, with a magnificent sense of the allegory into which he was soaring, "a-going to put out on a certain voyage. What name is wrote upon that craft indelibly? Is it *The Gay*?" or," said the captain raising his voice as much as to say, observe the point of this, "is it *The Gills*?"

"Ned," said the old man, drawing Walter to his side, and taking his arm tenderly through his, "I know. I know. Of course I know that Wally considers me more than himself always. That's in my mind. When I say he is glad to go, I mean I hope he is. Eh? look you, Ned, and you too, Wally, my dear, this is new and unexpected to me; and I am afraid my being behind the time, and poor, is at the bottom of it. Is it really good fortune for him, do you tell me, now?" said the old man, looking anxiously from one to the other. "Really and truly? Is it? I can reconcile myself to almost anything that advances Wally, but I won't have Wally putting himself at any disadvantage for me, or keeping anything from me. You, Ned Cuttle!" said the old man, fastening on the captain, to the manifest confusion of that diplomatist; "are you dealing plainly by your old friend? Speak out, Ned Cuttle. Is there anything behind? Ought he to go? How do you know it first, and why?"

As it was a contest of affection and self-denial, Walter struck in with infinite effect, to the captain's relief; and between them they tolerably reconciled old Sol Gills, by continued talking, to the project; or rather so confused him, that nothing, not even the pain of separation, was distinctly clear to his mind.

He had not much time to balance the matter; for on the very next day, Walter received from Mr. Carker the manager, the necessary credentials for his passage and outfit, together with the information that the *Son* and *Heir* would sail in a fortnight, or within a day or two afterwards at latest. In the hurry of preparation: which Walter purposely enhanced as much as possible; the old man lost what little self-possession he ever had; and so the time of departure drew on rapidly.

The captain, who did not fail to make himself acquainted with all that passed, through inquiries of Wal-

ter from day to day, found the time still tending on towards his going away without any occasion offering itself, or seeming likely to offer itself, for a better understanding of his position. It was after much consideration of this fact, and much pondering over such an unfortunate combination of circumstances, that a bright idea occurred to the captain. Suppose he made a call on Mr. Carker, and tried to find out from *him* how the land really lay!

Captain Cuttle liked this idea very much. It came upon him in a moment of inspiration, as he was smoking an early pipe in Brig-place after breakfast; and it was worthy of the tobacco. It would quiet his conscience, which was an honest one, and was made a little uneasy by what Walter had confided to him, and what Sol Gills had said; and it would be a deep, shrewd act of friendship. He would sound Mr. Carker carefully, and say much or little, just as he read that gentleman's character, and discovered that they got on well together or the reverse.

Accordingly, without the fear of Walter before his eyes (who he knew was at home packing), Captain Cuttle again assumed his ankle-jacks and mourning brooch, and issued forth on this second expedition. He purchased no propitiatory nosegay on the present occasion, as he was going to a place of business; but he put a small sunflower in his button-hole to give himself an agreeable relish of the country; and with this, and the knobby stick, and the glazed hat, bore down upon the offices of Dombey and Son.

After taking a glass of warm rum-and-water at a tavern close by, to collect his thoughts, the captain made a rush down the court lest its good effects should evaporate, and appeared suddenly to Mr. Perch.

"Matey," said the captain, in persuasive accents. "One of your governors is named Carker."

Mr. Perch admitted it; but gave him to understand, as in official duty bound, that all his governors were engaged, and never expected to be disengaged any more.

"Look'ee here, mate," said the captain in his ear; "my name's Cap'en Cuttle."

The captain would have hooked Perch gently to him; but Mr. Perch eluded the attempt; not so much in design, as in starting at the sudden thought that such a weapon unexpectedly exhibited to Mrs. Perch might, in her then delicate condition, be destructive to that lady's hopes.

"If you'll be so good as just report Cap'en Cuttle here, when you get a chance," said the captain, "I'll wait."

Saying which, the captain took his seat on Mr. Perch's bracket, and drawing out his handkerchief from the crown of the glazed hat, which he jammed between his

knees (without injury to its shape, for nothing human could bend it), rubbed his head well all over, and appeared refreshed. He subsequently arranged his hair with his hook, and sat looking round the office, contemplating the clerks with a serene aspect.

The captain's equanimity was so impenetrable, and he was altogether so mysterious a being, that Perch the messenger was daunted.

"What name was it you said?" asked Mr. Perch, bending down over him as he sat on the bracket.

"Cap'en," in a deep hoarse whisper.

"Yes," said Mr. Perch, keeping time with his head.

"Cuttle."

"Oh!" said Mr. Perch, in the same tone, for he caught it, and couldn't help it; the captain in his diplomacy, was so impressive. "I'll see if he's disengaged now. I don't know. Perhaps he may be for a minute."

"Ay, ay, my lad, I won't detain him longer than a minute," said the captain, nodding with all the weighty importance that he felt within him. Perch, soon returning, said, "Will Captain Cuttle walk this way?"

Mr. Carker the manager, standing on the hearth-rug before the empty fire-place, which was ornamented with a castellated sheet of brown paper, looked at the captain as he came in, with no very special encouragement.

"Mr. Carker?" said Captain Cuttle.

"I believe so," said Mr. Carker, showing all his teeth. The captain liked his answering with a smile: it looked pleasant. "You see," began the captain, rolling his eyes slowly round the little room, and taking in as much of it as his shirt collar permitted; "I'm a seafaring man myself, Mr. Carker, and Wal'r, as is on your books here, is a'most a son of mine."

"Walter Gay?" said Mr. Carker, showing all his teeth again.

"Wal'r Gay it is," replied the captain, "right!" The captain's manner expressed a warm approval of Mr. Carker's quickness of perception. "I'm a intimate friend of his and his uncle's. Perhaps," said the captain, "you may have heard your head governor mention my name?—Captain Cuttle."

"No!" said Mr. Carker, with a still wider demonstration than before.

"Well," resumed the captain, "I've the pleasure of his acquaintance. I waited upon him down on the Sussex coast there, with my young friend Wal'r, when—in short, when there was a little accommodation wanted." The captain nodded his head in a manner that was at once comfortable, easy, and expressive. "You remember, I dare say?"

"I think," said Mr. Carker, "I had the honour of arranging the business."

"To be sure!" returned the captain. "Right again! you had. Now I've took the liberty of coming here—"

"Won't you sit down?" said Mr. Carker, smiling.

"Thank'ee," returned the captain, availing himself of the offer. "A man does get more way upon himself, perhaps, in his conversation, when he sits down. Won't you take a cheer yourself?"

"No thank you," said the manager, standing, perhaps from the force of winter habit, with his back against the chimney-piece, and looking down upon the captain with an eye in every tooth and gum. "You have taken the liberty, you were going to say—though it's none—"

"Thank'ee kindly, my lad," returned the captain: "of coming here, on account of my friend Wal'r. Sol Gills, his uncle, is a man of science, and in science he may be considered a clipper; but he ain't what I should altogether call a able seaman—not a man of practice. Wal'r is as trim a lad as ever stepped; but he's a little down by the head in one respect, and that is modesty. Now what I should wish to put to you," said the captain, lowering his voice, and speaking in a kind of confidential growl, "in a friendly way, entirely between you and me, and for my own private reckoning, 'till your head governor has wore round a bit, and I can come alongside of him, is this.—Is everything right and comfortable here, and is Wal'r out'ard bound with a pretty fair wind?"

"What do you think now, Captain Cuttle," returned Carker, gathering up his skirts and settling himself in his position. "You are a practical man; what do you think?"

The acuteness and significance of the captain's eye, as he cocked it in reply, no words short of those unutterable Chinese words before referred to could describe.

"Come!" said the captain, unspeakably encouraged. "What do you say? Am I right or wrong?"

So much had the captain expressed in his eye, emboldened and incited by Mr. Carker's smiling urbanity, that he felt himself in as fair a condition to put the question, as if he had expressed his sentiments with the utmost elaboration.

"Right," said Mr. Carker, "I have no doubt."

"Out'ard bound with fair weather, then, I say," cried Captain Cuttle.

Mr. Carker smiled assent.

"Wind right astarn, and plenty of it," pursued the captain.

Mr. Carker smiled assent again.

"Ay, ay!" said Captain Cuttle, greatly relieved and pleased. "I know'd how she headed, well enough; I told Wal'r so. Thank'ee, thank'ee."

"Gay has brilliant prospects," observed Mr. Carker, stretching his mouth wider yet; "all the world before him."

"All the world and his wife too, as the saying is," returned the delighted captain.

At the word "wife" (which he had uttered without design), the captain stopped, cocked his eye again, and putting the glazed hat on the top of the knobby stick, gave it a twirl, and looked sideways at his always smiling friend.

"I'd bet a gill of old Jamaica," said the captain, eyeing him attentively, "that I know what you're smiling at!"

Mr. Carker took his cue, and smiled the more.

"It goes no farther?" said the captain, making a poke at the door with the knobby stick to assure him that it was shut.

"Not an inch," said Mr. Carker.

"You're a thinking of a capital F perhaps?" said the captain.

Mr. Carker didn't deny it.

"Anything about a L," said the captain, "or a O?"

Mr. Carker still smiled.

"Am I right again?" inquired the captain in a whisper, with the scarlet circle on his forehead, swelling in his triumphant joy.

Mr. Carker, in reply, still smiling, and now nodding assent, Captain Cuttle rose and squeezed him by the hand, assuring him warmly, that they were on the same tack, and that as for him (Cuttle) he had laid his course that way, all along. "He know'd her first," said the captain, with all the secrecy and gravity that the subject demanded, "in an uncommon manner — *you* remember his finding her in the street, when she was almost a babby — he has liked her ever since, and she him, as much as two such youngsters can. We've always said, Sol Gills and me, that they was cut out for each other."

A cat, or a monkey, or a hyena, or a death's-head, could not have shown the captain more teeth at one time, than Mr. Carker showed him at this period of their interview.

"There's a general in-draught that way," observed the happy captain. "Wind and water sets in that direction, you see. Look at his being present t'other day!"

"Most favourable to his hopes," said Mr. Carker.

"Look at his being towed along in the wake of that day!" pursued the captain. "Why what can cut him adrift now?"

"Nothing," replied Mr. Carker.

"You're right again," returned the captain, giving his hand another squeeze. "Nothing it is. So! steady. There's a son gone; pretty little creatur. Ain't there?"

"Yes, there's a son gone," said the acquiescent Carker. "Pass the word and there's another ready for you," quoth the captain. "Nevy of a scientific uncle! Nevy of Sol Gills! Wal'r! Wal'r as is already in your business! And"—said the captain, rising gradually to a quotation he was preparing for a final burst, "who—comes from Sol Gill's daily, to your business, and your buzzums."

The captain's complacency as he gently jugged Mr. Carker with his elbow, on concluding each of the foregoing short sentences, could be surpassed by nothing but the exultation with which he fell back and eyed him when he had finished this brilliant display of eloquence and sagacity; his great blue waistcoat heaving with the throes of such a masterpiece, and his nose in a state of violent inflammation from the same cause.

"Am I right?" said the captain.

"Captain Cuttle," said Mr. Carker, bending down at the knees, for a moment, in an odd manner, as if he were falling together to hug the whole of himself at once, "your views in reference to Walter Gay are thoroughly and accurately right. I understand that we speak together in confidence."

"Honour!" interposed the captain. "Not a word."

"To him or any one?" pursued the manager.

Captain Cuttle frowned and shook his head.

"But merely for your own satisfaction and guidance—and guidance, of course," repeated Mr. Carker, "with a view to your future proceedings."

"Thank'ee kindly, I am sure," said the captain, listening with great attention.

"I have no hesitation in saying, that's the fact. You have hit the probabilities exactly."

"And with regard to your head governor," said the captain, "why an interview had better come about nat'ral between us. There's time enough."

Mr. Carker, with his mouth from ear to ear, repeated, "Time enough." Not articulating the words, but bowing his head affably, and forming them with his tongue and lips.

"And as I know now—it's what I always said—that Wal'r's in a way to make his fortune," said the captain.

"To make his fortune," Mr. Carker repeated, in the same dumb manner.

"And as Wal'r's going on this little voyage is, as I may say, in his day's work, and a part of his general expectations here," said the captain.

"Of his general expectations here," assented Mr. Carker, dumbly as before.

"Why, so long as I know that," pursued the captain, "there's no hurry, and my mind's at ease."

Mr. Carker still blandly assenting in the same voiceless manner, Captain Cuttle was strongly confirmed in his opinion that he was one of the most agreeable men he had ever met, and that even Mr. Dombey might improve himself on such a model. With great heartiness, therefore, the captain once again extended his enormous hand (not unlike an old block in colour), and gave him a grip that left upon his smoother flesh a proof impression of the chinks and crevices with which the captain's palm was liberally tattoo'd.

"Farewell!" said the captain. "I ain't a man of many words, but I take it very kind of you to be so friendly, and above-board. You'll excuse me if I've been at all intruding, will you?" said the captain.

"Not at all," returned the other.

"Thank'ee. My berth ain't very roomy," said the captain, turning back again, "but it's tolerably snug; and if you was to find yourself near Brig-place, number nine, at any time—will you make a note of it?—and would come up-stairs, without minding what was said by the person at the door, I should be proud to see you."

With that hospitable invitation, the captain said "Good day!" and walked out and shut the door; leaving Mr. Carker still reclining against the chimney-piece. In whose sly look and watchful manner; in whose false mouth, stretched but not laughing; in whose spotless cravat and very whiskers; even in whose silent passing of his soft hand over his white linen and his smooth face; there was something desperately cat-like.

The unconscious captain walked out in a state of self-glorification that imparted quite a new cut to the broad blue suit. "Stand by, Ned!" said the captain to himself. "You've done a little business for the youngsters to-day, my lad!"

In his exultation, and his familiarity, present and prospective, with the House, the captain, when he reached the outer office, could not refrain from rallying Mr. Perch a little, and asking him whether he thought everybody was still engaged. But not to be bitter on a man who had done his duty, the captain whispered in his ear, that if he felt disposed for a glass of rum-and-water, and would follow, he would be happy to bestow the same upon him.

Before leaving the premises, the captain, somewhat to the astonishment of the clerks, looked round from a central point of view, and took a general survey of the office as part and parcel of a project in which his young friend was nearly interested. The strong-room excited his especial admiration; but, that he might not appear too

particular, he limited himself to an approving glance, and, with a graceful recognition of the clerks as a body, that was full of politeness and patronage, passed out into the court. Being promptly joined by Mr. Perch, he conveyed that gentleman to the tavern, and fulfilled his pledge—hastily, for Perch's time was precious.

"I'll give you for a toast," said the captain, "Wal'r!"

"Who?" submitted Mr. Perch.

"Wal'r!" repeated the captain, in a voice of thunder.

Mr. Perch, who seemed to remember having heard in infancy that there was once a poet of that name, made no objection; but he was much astonished at the captain's coming into the city to propose a poet; indeed if he had proposed to put a poet's statue up—say Shakespeare's for example—in a civic thoroughfare, he could hardly have done a greater outrage to Mr. Perch's experience. On the whole, he was such a mysterious and incomprehensible character, that Mr. Perch decided not to mention him to Mrs. Perch at all, in case of giving rise to any disagreeable consequences.

Mysterious and incomprehensible the captain, with that lively sense upon him of having done a little business for the youngsters, remained all day, even to his most intimate friends; and but that Walter attributed his winks and grins, and other such pantomimic reliefs of himself, to his satisfaction in the success of their innocent deception upon old Sol Gills, he would assuredly have betrayed himself before night. As it was, however, he kept his own secret; and went home late from the instrument-maker's house, wearing the glazed hat so much on one side, and carrying such a beaming expression in his eyes, that Mrs. MacStinger (who might have been brought up at Doctor Blimber's, she was such a Roman matron) fortified herself, at the first glimpse of him, behind the open street door, and refused to come out to the contemplation of her blessed infants, until he was securely lodged in his own room.

CHAPTER XVIII.

Father and Daughter.

THERE is a hush through Mr. Dombey's house. Servants gliding up and down stairs rustle but make no sound of footsteps. They talk together constantly, and sit long at meals, making much of their meat and drink, and enjoying themselves after a grim unholy fashion. Mrs. Wickam, with her eyes suffused with tears, relates melancholy anecdotes; and tells them how she always

said at Mrs. Pipchin's that it would be so, and takes more table-ale than usual, and is very sorry but sociable. Cook's state of mind is similar. She promises a little fry for supper, and struggles about equally against her feelings and the onions. Towlinson begins to think there's a fate in it, and wants to know if anybody can tell him of any good that ever came of living in a corner house. It seems to all of them as having happened a long time ago ; though yet the child lies, calm and beautiful, upon his little bed.

After dark there come some visitors—noiseless visitors, with shoes of felt—who have been there before ; and with them comes that bed of rest which is so strange a one for infant sleepers. All this time, the bereaved father has not been seen even by his attendant ; for he sits in a corner of his own dark room when any one is there, and never seems to move at other times, except to pace it to and fro. But in the morning it is whispered among the household that he was heard to go upstairs in the dead night, and that he stayed there—in the room—until the sun was shining.

At the offices in the city, the ground-glass windows are made more dim by shutters ; and while the lighted lamps upon the desks are half extinguished by the day that wanders in, the day is half extinguished by the lamps, and an unusual gloom prevails. There is not much business done. The clerks are indisposed to work ; and they make assignations to eat chops in the afternoon, and go up the river. Perch, the messenger, stays long upon his errands ; and finds himself in bars of public houses, invited thither by friends, and holding forth on the uncertainty of human affairs. He goes home to Ball's Pond earlier in the evening than usual, and treats Mrs. Perch to a veal cutlet and Scotch ale. Mr. Carker the manager treats no one ; neither is he treated ; but alone in his own room he shows his teeth all day ; and it would seem that there is something gone from Mr. Carker's path—some obstacle removed—which clears his way before him.

Now the rosy children living opposite to Mr. Dombey's house, peep from their nursery windows down into the street ; for there are four black horses at his door, with feathers on their heads ; and feathers tremble on the carriage that they draw ; and these, and an array of men with scarves and staves, attract a crowd. The juggler who was going to whirl the basin, puts his loose coat on again over his fine dress ; and his trudging wife, one-sided with her heavy baby in her arms, loiters to see the company come out. But closer to her dingy breast she presses her baby, when the burden that is so easily carried is borne forth ; and the youngest of the rosy

children at the high window opposite, needs no restraining hand to check her in her glee, when, pointing with her dimpled finger, she looks into her nurse's face, and asks "What's that!"

And now, among the knot of servants dressed in mourning, and the weeping women, Mr. Dombey passes through the hall to the other carriage that is waiting to receive him. He is not "brought down," these observers think, by sorrow and distress of mind. His walk is as erect, his bearing is as stiff as it ever has been. He hides his face behind no handkerchief, and looks before him. But that his face is something sunk, and rigid, and is pale, it bears the same expression as of old. He takes his place within the carriage, and three other gentlemen follow. Then the grand funeral moves slowly down the street. The feathers are yet nodding in the distance, when the juggler has the basin spinning on a cane, and has the same crowd to admire it. But the juggler's wife is less alert than usual with the money-box, for a child's burial has set her thinking that perhaps the baby underneath her shabby shawl may not grow up to be a man, and wear a sky-blue fillet round his head, and salmon-coloured worsted drawers, and tumble in the mud.

The feathers wind their gloomy way along the streets, and come within the sound of a church bell. In this same church, the pretty boy received all that will soon be left of him on earth—a name. All of him that is dead, they lay there, near the perishable substance of his mother. It is well. Their ashes lie where Florence in her walks—oh lonely, lonely walks!—may pass them any day.

The service over, and the clergyman withdrawn, Mr. Dombey looks round, demanding in a low voice, whether the person who has been requested to attend to receive instructions for the tablet, is there?

Some one comes forward, and says "Yes."

Mr. Dombey intimates where he would have it placed, and shows him, with his hand upon the wall, the shape and size; and how it is to follow the memorial to the mother. Then, with his pencil, he writes out the inscription, and gives it to him; adding, "I wish to have it done at once."

"It shall be done immediately, sir."

"There is really nothing to inscribe but name and age, you see."

The man bows, glancing at the paper, but appears to hesitate. Mr. Dombey, not observing his hesitation, turns away, and leads towards the porch.

"I beg your pardon, sir;" a touch falls gently on his mourning cloak; "but as you wish it done immediately, and it may be put in hand when I get back—"

"Well?"

"Will you be so good as read it over again? I think there's a mistake."

"Where?"

The statuary gives him back the paper, and points out, with his pocket rule, the words, "beloved and only child."

"It should be 'son,' I think, sir?"

"You are right. Of course. Make the correction."

The father, with a hastier step, pursues his way to the coach. When the other three, who follow closely, take their seats, his face is hidden for the first time—shaded by his cloak. Nor do they see it any more that day. He alights first, and passes immediately into his own room. The other mourners (who are only Mr. Chick, and two of the medical attendants) proceed up-stairs to the drawing-room, to be received by Mrs. Chick and Miss Tox. And what the face is, in the shut-up chamber underneath: or what the thoughts are: what the heart is, what the contest or the suffering: no one knows.

The chief thing that they know, below-stairs, in the kitchen, is that "it seems like Sunday." They can hardly persuade themselves but that there is something unbecoming, if not wicked, in the conduct of the people out of doors, who pursue their ordinary occupations, and wear their every-day attire. It is quite a novelty to have the blinds up, and the shutters open: and they make themselves dimly comfortable over bottles of wine, which are freely broached as on a festival. They are much inclined to moralise. Mr. Towlinson proposes with a sigh, "Amendment to us all!" for which, as cook says with another sigh, "There's room enough, God knows." In the evening, Mrs. Chick and Miss Tox take to needlework again. In the evening also, Mr. Towlinson goes out to take the air, accompanied by the housemaid, who has not yet tried her mourning bonnet. They are very tender to each other at dusky street-corners, and Towlinson has visions of leading an altered and blameless existence as a serious green-grocer in Oxford Market.

There is sounder sleep and deeper rest in Mr. Dombey's house to-night, than there has been for many nights. The morning sun awakens the old household, settled down once more in their old ways. The rosy children opposite, run past with hoops. There is a splendid wedding in the church. The juggler's wife is active with the money-box in another quarter of the town. The mason sings and whistles as he chips out P-A-U-L in the marble slab before him.

And can it be that in a world so full and busy, the loss of one weak creature makes a void in any heart, so wide and deep that nothing but the width and depth of vast

eternity can fill it up! Florence, in her innocent affliction, might have answered, "Oh my brother, oh my dearly loved and loving brother! Only friend and companion of my slighted childhood! Could any less idea shed the light already dawning on your early grave, or give birth to the softened sorrow that is springing into life beneath this rain of tears!"

"My dear child," said Mrs. Chick, who held it as a duty incumbent on her to improve the occasion, "when you are as old as I am—"

"Which will be the prime of life," observed Miss Tox.

"You will then," pursued Mrs. Chick, gently squeezing Miss Tox's hand in acknowledgment of her friendly remark, "you will then know that all grief is unavailing, and that it is our duty to submit."

"I will try, dear aunt. I do try," answered Florence, sobbing.

"I am glad to hear it," said Mrs. Chick, "because, my love, as our dear Miss Tox—of whose sound sense and excellent judgment, there cannot possibly be two opinions—"

"My dear Louisa, I shall really be proud, soon," said Miss Tox.

—"will tell you, and confirm by her experience," pursued Mrs. Chick, "we are called upon on all occasions to make an effort. It is required of us. If any—my dear," turning to Miss Tox, "I want a word. Mis—Mis—"

"Demeanour?" suggested Miss Tox.

"No, no, no," said Mrs. Chick. "How can you? Goodness me, it's on the end of my tongue. Mis—"

"Placed affection?" suggested Miss Tox, timidly.

"Good gracious, Lucretia!" returned Mrs. Chick.

"How very monstrous! Misanthrope is the word I want. The idea! Misplaced affection! I say, if any misanthrope were to put, in my presence, the question, 'Where were we born?' I should reply, 'to make an effort.'"

"Very good indeed," said Miss Tox, much impressed by the originality of the sentiment. "Very good."

"Unhappily," pursued Mrs. Chick, "we have a warning under our own eyes. We have but too much reason to suppose, my dear child, that if an effort had been made in time, in this family, a train of the most trying and distressing circumstances might have been avoided. Nothing shall ever persuade me," observed the good matron, with a resolute air, "but that if that effort had been made by poor dear Fanny, the poor dear darling child would at least have had a stronger constitution."

Mrs. Chick abandoned herself to her feelings for half a moment; but, as a practical illustration of her doctrine, brought herself up short, in the middle of a sob, and went on again.

"Therefore, Florence, pray let us see that you have some strength of mind, and do not selfishly aggravate the distress in which your poor papa is plunged."

"Dear aunt!" said Florence, kneeling quickly down before her, that she might the better and more earnestly look into her face. "Tell me more about papa. Pray tell me about him! Is he quite heart-broken?"

Miss Tox was of a tender nature, and there was something in this appeal that moved her very much. Whether she saw in it a succession, on the part of the neglected child, to the affectionate concern so often expressed by her dead brother—or a love that sought to twine itself about the heart that had loved him, and that could not bear to be shut out from sympathy with such a sorrow, in such sad community of love and grief—or whether she only recognised the earnest and devoted spirit which, although discarded and repulsed, was wrung with tenderness long unreturned, and in the waste and solitude of this bereavement cried to him to seek a comfort in it, and to give some, by some small response—whatever may have been her understanding of it, it moved Miss Tox. For the moment she forgot the majesty of Mrs. Chick, and, patting Florence hastily on the cheek, turned aside and suffered the tears to gush from her eyes, without waiting for a lead from that wise matron.

Mrs. Chick herself lost, for a moment, the presence of mind on which she so much prided herself; and remained mute, looking on the beautiful young face that had so long, so steadily, and patiently, been turned towards the little bed. But recovering her voice—which was synonymous with her presence of mind, indeed they were one and the same thing—she replied with dignity:

"Florence, my dear child, your poor papa is peculiar at times; and to question me about him, is to question me upon a subject which I really do not pretend to understand. I believe I have as much influence with your papa as anybody has. Still, all I can say is, that he has said very little to me; and that I have only seen him once or twice for a minute at a time, and indeed have hardly seen him then, for his room has been dark. I have said to your papa 'Paul!'—that is the exact expression I used—'Paul! why do you not take something stimulating?' Your papa's reply has always been, 'Louisa, have the goodness to leave me. I want nothing. I am better by myself.' If I was to be put upon my oath to-morrow, Lucretia, before a magistrate," said Mrs. Chick, "I have no doubt I could venture to swear to those identical words."

Miss Tox expressed her admiration by saying, "My Louisa is ever methodical!"

"In short, Florence," resumed her aunt, "literally

nothing has passed between your poor papa and myself, until to-day ; when I mentioned to your papa that Sir Barnet and Lady Skettles had written exceedingly kind notes—our sweet boy ! Lady Skettles loved him like a—where’s my pocket-handkerchief !”

Miss Tox produced one.

“Exceedingly kind notes, proposing that you should visit them for a change of scene. Mentioning to your papa that I thought Miss Tox and myself might now go home (in which he quite agreed), I inquired if he had any objection to your accepting this invitation. He said, ‘No, Louisa, not the least !’”

Florence raised her tearful eyes.

“At the same time, if you would prefer staying here, Florence, to paying this visit at present, or to going home with me—”

“I should much prefer it, aunt,” was the faint rejoinder.

“Why then, child,” said Mrs. Chick, “you can. It’s a strange choice, I must say. But you always *were* strange. Anybody else at your time of life, and after what has passed—my dear Miss Tox, I have lost my pocket-handkerchief again—would be glad to leave here, one would suppose.”

“I should not like to feel,” said Florence, “as if the house was avoided. I should not like to think that the—his—the rooms up-stairs were quite empty and dreary, aunt. I would rather stay here, for the present. Oh my brother ! oh my brother !”

It was a natural emotion not to be suppressed ; and it would make way even between the fingers of the hands with which she covered up her face. The overcharged and heavy-laden breast must sometimes have that vent, or the poor wounded solitary heart within it would have fluttered like a bird with broken wings, and sunk down in the dust.

“Well, child !” said Mrs. Chick, after a pause. “I wouldn’t on any account say anything unkind to you, and that I’m sure you know. You will remain here, then, and do exactly as you like. No one will interfere with you, Florence, or wish to interfere with you, I’m sure.”

Florence shook her head in sad assent.

“I had no sooner begun to advise your poor papa that he really ought to seek some distraction and restoration in a temporary change,” said Mrs. Chick, “than he told me he had already formed the intention of going into the country for a short time. I’m sure I hope he’ll go very soon. He can’t go too soon. But I suppose there are some arrangements connected with his private papers and so forth, consequent on the affliction that has tried

us all so much—I can't think what's become of mine: Lucretia, lend me yours, my dear—that may occupy him for one or two evenings in his own room. Your papa's a Dombey, child, if ever there was one," said Mrs. Chick, drying both her eyes at once with great care on opposite corners of Miss Tox's handkerchief. "He'll make an effort. There's no fear of him."

"Is there nothing, aunt," asked Florence, trembling, "I might do to—"

"Lord, my dear child," interposed Mrs. Chick, hastily, "what are you talking about? If your papa said to me—I have given you his exact words, 'Louisa, I want nothing; I am better by myself'—what do you think he'd say to you? You mustn't show yourself to him, child. Don't dream of such a thing."

"Aunt," said Florence, "I will go and lie down in my bed."

Mrs. Chick approved of this resolution, and dismissed her with a kiss. But Miss Tox, on a faint pretence of looking for the mislaid handkerchief, went up-stairs after her; and tried in a few stolen minutes to comfort her, in spite of great discouragement from Susan Nipper. For Miss Nipper, in her burning zeal, disparaged Miss Tox as a crocodile; yet her sympathy seemed genuine, and had at least the vantage-ground of disinterestedness—there was little favour to be won by it.

And was there no one nearer and dearer than Susan, to uphold the striving heart in its anguish? Was there no other neck to clasp; no other face to turn to? no one else to say a soothing word to such deep sorrow? Was Florence so alone in the bleak world that nothing else remained to her? Nothing. Stricken motherless and brotherless at once—for in the loss of little Paul, that first and greatest loss fell heavily upon her—this was the only help she had. Oh, who can tell how much she needed help at first.

At first, when the house subsided into its accustomed course, and they had all gone away, except the servants, and her father shut up in his own rooms, Florence could do nothing but weep, and wander up and down, and sometimes, in a sudden pang of desolate remembrance, fly to her own chamber, wring her hands, lay her face down on her bed, and know no consolation: nothing but the bitterness and cruelty of grief. This commonly ensued upon the recognition of some spot or object very tenderly associated with him; and it made the miserable house, at first, a place of agony.

But it is not in the nature of pure love to burn so fiercely and unkindly long. The flame that in its grosser composition has the taint of earth, may prey upon the breast that gives it shelter; but the sacred fire from

heaven is as gentle in the heart as when it rested on the heads of the assembled twelve, and showed each man his brother, brightened and unhurt. The image conjured up, there soon returned the placid face, the softened voice, the loving looks, the quiet trustfulness and peace ; and Florence, though she wept still, wept more tranquilly, and courted the remembrance.

It was not very long before the golden water, dancing on the wall, in the old place at the old serene time, had her calm eyes fixed upon it as it ebbed away. It was not very long before that room again knew her, often ; sitting there alone, as patient and as mild as when she had watched beside the little bed. When any sharp sense of its being empty smote upon her, she could kneel beside it, and pray GOD—it was the pouring out of her full heart—to let one angel love her and remember her.

It was not very long, before, in the midst of the dismal house so wide and dreary, her low voice in the twilight, slowly, and stopping sometimes, touched the old air to which he had so often listened, with his drooping head upon her arm. And after that, and when it was quite dark, a little strain of music trembled in the room : so softly played and sung, that it was more like the mournful recollection of what she had done at his request on that last night, than the reality repeated. But it was repeated, often—very often, in the shadowy solitude : and broken murmurs of the strain still trembled on the keys, when the sweet voice was hushed in tears.

Thus she gained heart to look upon the work with which her fingers had been busy by his side on the seashore ; and thus it was not very long before she took to it again—with something of a human love for it, as if it had been sentient and had known him ; and, sitting in a window, near her mother's picture, in the unused room so long deserted, wore away the thoughtful hours.

Why did the dark eyes turn so often from this work to where the rosy children lived ? They were not immediately suggestive of her loss ; for they were all girls : four little sisters. But they were motherless like her—and had a father.

It was easy to know when he had gone out and was expected home, for the elder child was always dressed and waiting for him at the drawing-room window, or in the balcony ; and when he appeared, her expectant face lighted up with joy, while the others at the high window, and always on the watch too, clapped their hands, and drummed them on the sill, and called to him. The older child would come down to the hall, and put her hand in his, and lead him up the stairs ; and Florence would see her afterwards sitting by his side, or on his

knee, or hanging coaxingly about his neck and talking to him : and though they were always gay together, he would often watch her face, as if he thought her like her mother that was dead. Florence would sometimes look no more at this, and bursting into tears would hide behind the curtain as if she were frightened, or would hurry from the window. Yet she could not help returning ; and her work would soon fall unheeded from her hands again.

It was the house that had been empty years ago. It had remained so for a long time. At last, and while she had been away from home, this family had taken it ; and it was repaired and newly painted ; and there were birds and flowers about it ; and it looked very different from its old self. But she never thought of the house. The children and their father were all in all.

When he had dined, she could see them, through the open windows, go down with their governess or nurse, and cluster round the table ; and in the still summer weather, the sound of their childish voices and clear laughter would come ringing across the street, into the drooping air of the room in which she sat. Then they would climb and clamber up-stairs with him, and romp about him on the sofa, or group themselves at his knee, a very nosegay of little faces, while he seemed to tell them some story. Or they would come running out into the balcony ; and then Florence would hide herself quickly, lest it should check them in their joy, to see her in her black dress, sitting there alone.

The elder child remained with her father when the rest had gone away, and made his tea for him—happy little housekeeper she was then !—and sat conversing with him, sometimes at the window, sometimes in the room, until the candles came. He made her his companion, though she was some years younger than Florence ; and she could be as staid and pleasantly demure with her little book or work-box, as a woman. When they had candles, Florence from her own dark room was not afraid to look again. But when the time came for the child to say, "Good night, papa," and go to bed, Florence would sob and tremble as she raised her face to him, and could look no more.

Though still she would turn, again and again, before going to bed herself, from the simple air that had lulled him to rest so often, long ago, and from the other low soft broken strain of music back to that house. But that she ever thought of it, or watched it, was a secret which she kept within her own young breast.

And did that breast of Florence—Florence, so ingenious and true—so worthy of the love that he had borne her, and had whispered in his last faint words—whose

guileless heart was mirrored in the beauty of her face, and breathed in every accent of her gentle voice—did that young breast hold any other secret? Yes. One more.

When no one in the house was stirring, and the lights were all extinguished, she would softly leave her own room, and with noiseless feet descend the staircase, and approach her father's door. Against it, scarcely breathing, she would rest her face and head, and press her lips, in the yearning of her love. She crouched upon the cold stone floor outside it, every night, to listen even for his breath; and in her one absorbing wish to be allowed to show him some affection, to be a consolation to him, to win him over to the endurance of some tenderness from her, his solitary child, she would have knelt down at his feet, if she had dared, in humble supplication.

No one knew it. No one thought of it. The door was ever closed, and he shut up within. He went out once or twice, and it was said in the house that he was very soon going on his country journey; but he lived in those rooms, and lived alone, and never saw her, or inquired for her. Perhaps he did not even know that she was in the house.

One day, about a week after the funeral, Florence was sitting at her work, when Susan appeared, with a face half laughing and half crying, to announce a visitor.

"A visitor! To me, Susan!" said Florence, looking up in astonishment.

"Well, it *is* a wonder, ain't it now Miss Floy," said Susan; "but I wish you had a many visitors, I do, indeed, for you'd be all the better for it, and it's my opinion that the sooner you and me goes even to them old Skettleses, miss, the better for both, I may not wish to live in crowds, Miss Floy, but still I'm not an oyster."

To do Miss Nipper justice, she spoke more for her young mistress than herself; and her face showed it.

"But the visitor, Susan," said Florence.

Susan, with an hysterical explosion that was as much a laugh as a sob, and as much a sob as a laugh, answered, "Mr. Toots!"

The smile that appeared on Florence's face passed from it in a moment, and her eyes filled with tears. But at any rate it was a smile, and that gave great satisfaction to Miss Nipper.

"My own feelings exactly, Miss Floy," said Susan, putting her apron to her eyes, and shaking her head. "Immediately I see that Innocent in the hall, Miss Floy, I burst out laughing first, and then I choked."

Susan Nipper involuntarily proceeded to do the like again on the spot. In the meantime, Mr. Toots, who had come up-stairs after her, all unconscious of the effect he

produced, announced himself with his knuckles on the door, and walked in very briskly.

"How d'ye do, Miss Dombey?" said Mr. Toots. "I'm very well I thank you; how are you?"

Mr. Toots—than whom there were few better fellows in the world, though there may have been one or two brighter spirits—had laboriously invented this long burst of discourse with the view of relieving the feelings both of Florence and himself. But finding he had run through his property, as it were, in an injudicious manner, by squandering the whole before taking a chair, or before Florence had uttered a word, or before he had well got in at the door, he deemed it advisable to begin again.

"How d'ye do, Miss Dombey?" said Mr. Toots. "I'm very well, I thank you; how are you?"

Florence gave him her hand and said she was very well.

"I'm very well indeed," said Mr. Toots, taking a chair. "Very well indeed, I am. I don't remember," said Mr. Toots, after reflecting a little, "that I was ever better, thank you."

"It's very kind of you to come," said Florence, taking up her work. "I am very glad to see you."

Mr. Toots responded with a chuckle. Thinking that might be too lively, he corrected it with a sigh. Thinking that might be too melancholy, he corrected it with a chuckle. Not thoroughly pleasing himself with either mode of reply, he breathed hard.

"You were very kind to my dear brother," said Florence, obeying her own natural impulse to relieve him by saying so. "He often talked to me about you."

"Oh, it's of no consequence," said Mr. Toots, hastily. "Warm, ain't it?"

"It is beautiful weather," replied Florence.

"It agrees with *me!*" said Mr. Toots. "I don't think I ever was so well as I find myself at present, I'm obliged to you."

After stating this curious and unexpected fact, Mr. Toots fell into a deep well of silence.

"You have left Doctor Blimber's, I think?" said Florence, trying to help him out.

"I should hope so," returned Mr. Toots. And tumbled in again.

He remained at the bottom, apparently drowned, for at least ten minutes. At the expiration of that period, he suddenly floated, and said,

"Well! Good morning, Miss Dombey."

"Are you going?" asked Florence, rising.

"I don't know, though. No, not just at present," said Mr. Toots, sitting down again, most unexpectedly. "The fact is—I say, Miss Dombey!"

“Don’t be afraid to speak to me,” said Florence, with a quiet smile, “I should be very glad if you would talk about my brother.”

“Would you, though,” retorted Mr. Toots, with sympathy in every fibre of his otherwise expressionless face. “Poor Dombey! I’m sure I never thought that Burgess & Co.—fashionable tailors (but very dear), that we used to talk about—would make this suit of clothes for such a purpose.” Mr. Toots was dressed in mourning. “Poor Dombey! I say! Miss Dombey!” blubbered Mr. Toots.

“Yes,” said Florence.

“There’s a friend he took to very much at last. I thought you’d like to have him; perhaps, as a sort of keepsake. You remember his remembering Diogenes?”

“Oh yes! oh yes!” cried Florence.

“Poor Dombey! So do I,” said Mr. Toots.

Mr. Toots, seeing Florence in tears, had great difficulty in getting beyond this point, and had nearly tumbled into the well again. But a chuckle saved him on the brink.

“I say,” he proceeded, “Miss Dombey! I could have had him stolen for ten shillings, if they hadn’t given him up: and I would: but they were glad to get rid of him, I think. If you’d like to have him, he’s at the door. I brought him on purpose for you. He ain’t a lady’s dog, you know,” said Mr. Toots, “but you won’t mind that, will you?”

In fact, Diogenes was at that moment, as they presently ascertained, from looking down into the street, staring through the window of a hackney cabriolet, into which, for conveyance to that spot, he had been ensnared, on a false pretence of rats among the straw. Sooth to say, he was as unlike a lady’s dog as dog might be; and in his gruff anxiety to get out presented an appearance sufficiently unpromising, as he gave short yelps out of one side of his mouth, and overbalancing himself by the intensity of every one of those efforts, tumbled down into the straw, and then sprung panting up again, putting out his tongue, as if he had come express to a dispensary to be examined for his health.

But though Diogenes was as ridiculous a dog as one would meet with on a summer’s day; a blundering, ill-favoured, clumsy, bullet-headed dog, continually acting on a wrong idea that there was an enemy in the neighbourhood, whom it was meritorious to bark at; and though he was far from good-tempered, and certainly was not clever, and had hair all over his eyes, and a comic nose, and an inconsistent tail, and a gruff voice; he was dearer to Florence, in virtue of that parting remembrance of him, and that request that he might be taken

care of, than the most valuable and beautiful of his kind. So dear, indeed, was this same ugly Diogenes, and so welcome to her, that she took the jewelled hand of Mr. Toots, and kissed it in her gratitude. And when Diogenes, released, came tearing up the stairs and bouncing into the room (such a business as there was first to get him out of the cabriolet !), dived under all the furniture, and wound a long iron chain, that dangled from his neck, round legs of chairs and tables, and then tugged at it until his eyes became unnaturally visible, in consequence of their nearly starting out of his head ; and when he growled at Mr. Toots, who affected familiarity ; and went pell-mell at Towlinson, morally convinced that he was the enemy whom he had barked at round the corner all his life and had never seen yet ; Florence was as pleased with him as if he had been a miracle of discretion.

Mr. Toots was so overjoyed by the success of his present, and was so delighted to see Florence bending down over Diogenes, smoothing his coarse back with her little delicate hand—Diogenes graciously allowing it from the first moment of their acquaintance—that he felt it difficult to take leave, and would, no doubt, have been a much longer time in making up his mind to do so, if he had not been assisted by Diogenes himself, who suddenly took it into his head to bay Mr. Toots, and to make short runs at him with his mouth open. Not exactly seeing his way to the end of these demonstrations, and sensible that they placed the pantaloons constructed by the art of Burgess & Co. in jeopardy, Mr. Toots with, chuckles, lapsed out at the door : by which, after locking in again two or three times, without any object at all, and being on each occasion greeted with a fresh run from Diogenes, he finally took himself off and got away.

“Come, then, Di ! Dear Di ! Make friends with your new mistress. Let us love each other, Di !” said Florence, fondling his shaggy head. And Di, the rough and gruff, as if his hairy hide were pervious to the tear that dropped upon it, and his dog’s heart melted as it fell, put his nose up to her face, and swore fidelity.

Diogenes the man did not speak plainer to Alexander the Great than Diogenes the dog spoke to Florence. He subscribed to the offer of his little mistress cheerfully, and devoted himself to her service. A banquet was immediately provided for him in a corner ; and when he had eaten and drunk his fill, he went to the window where Florence was sitting, looking on, rose up on his hind legs, with his awkward fore paws on her shoulders, licked her face and hands, nestled his great head against her heart, and wagged his tail till he was tired. Finally,

Diogenes coiled himself up at her feet and went to sleep.

Although Miss Nipper was nervous in regard of dogs, and felt it necessary to come into the room with her skirts carefully collected about her, as if she were crossing a brook on stepping-stones; also to utter little screams and stand up on chairs when Diogenes stretched himself; she was in her own manner affected by the kindness of Mr. Toots, and could not see Florence so alive to the attachment and society of this rude friend of little Paul's, without some mental comments thereupon that brought the water to her eyes. Mr. Dombey, as a part of her reflections, may have been, in the association of ideas, connected with the dog; but, at any rate, after observing Diogenes and his mistress all the evening, and after exerting herself with much good will to provide Diogenes a bed in an ante-chamber outside his mistress's door, she said hurriedly to Florence, before leaving her for the night:

"Your pa's a going off, Miss Floy, to-morrow morning."

"To-morrow morning, Susan?"

"Yes, miss; that's the orders. Early."

"Do you know," asked Florence, without looking at her, "where papa is going, Susan?"

"Not exactly, miss. He's going to meet that precious major first, and I must say if I was acquainted with any major myself (which Heavens forbid), it shouldn't be a blue one!"

"Hush, Susan!" urged Florence gently.

"Well, Miss Floy," returned Miss Nipper, who was full of burning indignation, and minded her stops even less than usual. "I can't help it, blue he is, and while I was a Christian, although humble, I would have natural-coloured friends, or none."

It appeared from what she added and had gleaned down-stairs, that Mrs. Chick had proposed the major for Mr. Dombey's companion, and that Mr. Dombey, after some hesitation, had invited him.

"Talk of *him* being a change, indeed!" observed Miss Nipper to herself with boundless contempt. "If he's a change give me a constancy."

"Good night, Susan," said Florence.

"Good night, my darling dear Miss Floy."

Her tone of commiseration smote the chord so often roughly touched, but never listened to while she or any one looked on. Florence left alone, laid her head upon her hand, and pressing the other over her swelling heart, held free communication with her sorrows.

It was a wet night; and the melancholy rain fell pattering and dropping with a wearied sound. A sluggish

wind was blowing, and went moaning round the house, as if it were in pain or grief. A shrill noise quivered through the trees. While she sat weeping, it grew late, and dreary midnight tolled out from the steeples.

Florence was little more than a child in years—not yet fourteen—and the loneliness and gloom of such an hour in the great house where Death had lately made its own tremendous devastation, might have set an older fancy brooding on vague terrors. But her innocent imagination was too full of one theme to admit them. Nothing wandered in her thoughts but love—a wandering love, indeed, and cast away—but turning always to her father.

There was nothing in the dropping of the rain, the moaning of the wind, the shuddering of the trees, the striking of the solemn clocks, that shook this one thought, or diminished its interest. Her recollections of the dear dead boy—and they were never absent—were itself; the same thing. And oh, to be shut out: to be so lost: never to have looked into her father's face or touched him, since that hour!

She could not go to bed, poor child, and never had gone yet, since then, without making her nightly pilgrimage to his door. It would have been a strange sad sight to see her now, stealing lightly down the stairs through the thick gloom, and stopping at it with a beating heart, and blinded eyes, and hair that fell down loosely and unthought of: and touching it outside with her wet cheek. But the night covered it, and no one knew.

The moment that she touched the door on this night, Florence found that it was open. For the first time it stood open, though by but a hair's-breadth: and there was a light within. The first impulse of the timid child—and she yielded to it—was to retire swiftly. Her next, to go back, and to enter; and this second impulse held her in irresolution on the staircase.

In its standing open, even by so much as that chink, there seemed to be hope. There was encouragement in seeing a ray of light from within, stealing through the dark stern doorway, and falling in a thread upon the marble floor. She turned back, hardly knowing what she did, but urged on by the love within her, and the trial they had undergone together, but not shared: and with her hands a little raised and trembling glided in.

Her father sat at his old table in the middle room. He had been arranging some papers, and destroying others, and the latter lay in fragile ruins before him. The rain dripped heavily upon the glass panes in the

outer room, where he had so often watched poor Paul, a baby; and the low complainings of the wind were heard without.

But not by him. He sat with his eyes fixed on the table, so immersed in thought, that a far heavier tread than the light foot of his child could make, might have failed to rouse him. His face was turned towards her. By the waning lamp, and at that haggard hour, it looked worn and dejected; and in the utter loneliness surrounding him, there was an appeal to Florence that struck home.

“Papa! papa! Speak to me, dear papa!”

He started at her voice, and leaped up from his seat. She was close before him with extended arms, but he fell back.

“What is the matter?” he said, sternly. “Why do you come here? What has frightened you?”

If anything had frightened her, it was the face he turned upon her. The glowing love within the breast of his young daughter froze before it, and she stood and looked at him as if stricken into stone.

There was not one touch of tenderness or pity in it. There was not one gleam of interest, parental recognition, or relenting in it. There was a change in it, but not of that kind. The old indifference and cold constraint had given place to something: what, she never thought and did not dare to think, and yet she felt it in its force, and knew it well without a name; that as it looked upon her, seemed to cast a shadow on her head.

Did he see before him the successful rival of his son, in health and life? Did he look upon his own successful rival in that son’s affection? Did a mad jealousy and withered pride, poison sweet remembrances that should have endeared and made her precious to him? Could it be possible that it was gall to him to look upon her in her beauty and her promise: thinking of his infant boy?

Florence had no such thoughts. But love is quick to know when it is spurned and hopeless: and hope died out of hers, as she stood looking in her father’s face.

“I ask you, Florence, are you frightened? Is there anything the matter, that you come here?”

“I came papa—”

“Against my wishes.” Why?”

She saw he knew why: it was written broadly on his face: and dropped her head upon her hands with one prolonged low cry.

Let him remember it in that room, years to come. It has faded from the air, before he breaks the silence. It may pass as quickly from his brain, as he believes, but it is there. Let him remember it in that room, years to come!

He took her by the arm. His hand was cold, and loose, and scarcely closed upon her.

"You are tired, I dare say," he said, taking up the light, and leading her towards the door, "and want rest. We all want rest. Go, Florence. You have been dreaming."

The dream she had had, was over then, God help her! and she felt that it could never more come back.

"I will remain here to light you up the stairs. The whole house is yours, above there," said her father, slowly. "You are its mistress now. Good night!"

Still covering her face, she sobbed, and answered "Good night, dear papa," and silently ascended. Once she looked back as if she would have returned to him, but for fear. It was a momentary thought, too hopeless to encourage; and her father stood there with the light—hard, unresponsive, motionless—until the fluttering dress of his fair child was lost in the darkness.

Let him remember it in that room, years to come. The rain that falls upon the roof: the wind that mourns outside the door: may have foreknowledge in their melancholy sound. Let him remember it in that room, years to come!

The last time he had watched her, from the same place, winding up those stairs, she had had her brother in her arms. It did not move his heart towards her now, it steeled it: but he went into his room, and locked his door, and sat down in his chair, and cried for his lost boy.

Diogenes was broad awake upon his post, and waiting for his little mistress.

"Oh Di! Oh dear Di! Love me for his sake!"

Diogenes already loved her for her own, and didn't care how much he showed it. So he made himself vastly ridiculous by performing a variety of uncouth bounces in the ante-chamber, and concluded, when poor Florence was at last asleep, and dreaming of the rosy children opposite, by scratching open her bedroom door: rolling up his bed into a pillow: lying down on the boards at the full length of his tether, with his head towards her: and looking lazily at her, upside down, out of the tops of his eyes, until from winking and winking he fell asleep himself, and dreamed, with gruff barks, of his enemy.

END OF PART ONE OF "DOMBEY AND SON."

END OF VOLUME ELEVEN.

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